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LAURA VALMONT,

NOVEL

WRITTEN BY A LADY. K



L O N D O N :

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## P R E F A C E

**T**HE experience of every hour, tends to convince us, how much truth and good sense, are conveyed in that Arabian Proverb, which asserts that

*"An idle person is the Devil's play-fellow."*

The fear of encountering so very dangerous a *play-mate*, first induced me to engage myself in scribbling the following Story, and the hope that

that it may employ some of my own sex, as innocently in reading it, will, I flatter myself, palliate the presumption of offering to this most polished, literary, and enlightened age, so frivolous and imperfect a performance, which, I am conscious, cannot afford the least improvement, and I fear but little, if any amusement. Yet, if it serves to keep his *Grim Majesty* at a distance, during its perusal, I am persuaded, no part of its contents will induce him to visit its reader, with a view of taking advantage of any idea raised by the sentiments expressed in it.

I will,



## P R E E A C E.

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I will, therefore, venture to lay this trifle at the feet of *idlers*; and assure them, should they pick it up, and honour it with an hour's attention; they will find, that it possesses at least, the negative merit of being perfectly harmless.

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FREE A C T

I will; therefore, venture to lay  
this rule at the feet of Mr. W. and  
affirm that they should pick it up,  
and honour it with an hour's at-  
tention; they will find that it pos-  
sesses at least the negative merit of  
being perfectly harmless.

LAURA VALMONT.

# LETTER I.

I AM writing to my beloved Louisa from the most romantic and beautiful place in the southern part of Ireland. Imagination cannot picture a more enchanting scene than that which now appears before me, even from my windows; but you who are accustomed to shine in polished life, to grace the politest circles, surrounded by the most elegant productions of art, pursued by admirers, and occupied by the various succession of amusements, with which the Capital

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abounds



abounds, will, I fear, be inclined to think a description of lonely walks, shady bowers, murmuring streams, distant cascades, lofty mountains, or the wild, though harmonious concerts of the grove, but an insipid detail. I will therefore hasten to tell my dearest friend, what I am certain will interest her. My lord and master had an uncle, who went while he was very young, to the East Indies; there he amassed a very large fortune, and as he had many friends in Ireland, he remitted money to them, to purchase an estate for him in his native country. He wished to return, there to avoid the troubles which then threatened India. His friends served him faithfully, and purchased a rising estate for him, the present rent six thousand a year. Some time after, he was so fortunate as to obtain a peerage; he chose Emerton, his family name, to which he was particularly attached, for his title, and as he had no family of his own, and that my lord was his only nephew, he included his name in the patent. He had no  
 sooner

sooner finished his business, than he went to Ireland to look after his estate; but feeling himself declining, he wrote to his nephew, intreating him to come and take care of him; he also requested my company. My lord who had loved his mother passionately while she lived, and whose memory was still very dear to him, flew to her brother. I accompanied him; the old gentleman received us with the greatest cordiality, seemed charmed with our society, and shewed us Emerton-Place with apparent delight. I perceived with concern, that he was much worse than he apprehended, and it gave me pain to hear him forming future plans which it was impossible his emaciated frame could exist to execute. He continued to decline every day, and notwithstanding all the assistance or attention that the tenderest affection could procure, he died a few weeks after our arrival. This affair depressed my spirits for some weeks: my lord was excessively affected by the loss of his uncle, who left him an estate to

support a name he loved. You will therefore, my dear Louisa, direct to the Countess of Emerton, Emerton-Place. My lord desires his love to you and your amiable mother.

Accept the same from

your truly attached

HONORA EMERTON.

## LETTER II.

I THANK you, my dear Honora, ten thousand times, for your kind letter. I am charmed to find you like Emerton-Place, but felt a little chagrined at your total neglect of your neighbours, with whom on a future day I propose being acquainted. So large an addition to your fortune, will enable you to pursue and extend the benevolent plan you had laid down



down when I last saw you. Relieving the wretched, and turning woe and misery into joy and comfort, is, in my opinion, a God-like enjoyment, or as Mr. Tenour most emphatically expresses it—

“ To banquet on the blessings of the poor.”

But, apropos of wretchedness, I will tell you a very odd circumstance. You may remember that my old nurse is wife to the master of an American trader. She came to me some days ago, with a face full of business, and told me she had found a pretty companion for me, but that indeed poor lady she was so melancholy, she feared she should die—that she neither eat nor slept, and was always writing and crying,—that she gave her letters to a porter to carry to the post, who could not read, and she did not know, as she herself was as illiterate as the porter, who they were for. I asked her who she was, and how long she had known her? she answered, that her husband had sent her and some other people with goods on shore

shore in a yawl, with particular directions to take care of the lady, (for she was a lady of rank) about three weeks ago. That at that time her own children were ill of the small-pox, and that their danger had prevented her from coming sooner to me about the young lady, of whom she boasted the various excellencies, until she run herself quite out of breath. I took that opportunity of telling her, that if she could prevail on the young lady to come to me, I would pay her every attention in my power. She blessed me and departed; and in less than an hour returned, leading in one of the most finished beauties I ever beheld,—she seemed to shrink from observation, and was ready to faint. I took one of her hands, and tenderly pressing it between mine, led her to a sofa, where she sat motionless for some time. At length a shower of tears relieved her. My incomparable mother then joined us, welcomed her in that kind and affectionate manner with which one meets an old acquaintance; told her she hoped she  
would

would consider our house as her own, and said every thing the natural excellence of her heart could suggest, to soothe the lovely mourner. She attempted to express her gratitude, but we would not permit her to speak until she was more recovered, for fear it might exhaust her too much, and we had the pleasure of finding her more composed, than we had hoped for in so short a time. We learned from my nurse that her christian-name is Laura; as to her fir-name she did not know it.—

Now if there is an atom of a woman in you, you are dying for a description of this lovely unknown, in compassion therefore take it: She is tall, and exquisitely formed, her air noble and commanding, her manner elegant, graceful and prepossessing, her hair beautiful, the finest black-eyes in the universe, shaded by long dark eye-lashes, eye-brows that may vie with those of the immortal Siddons, a delicate nose, charming lips, teeth  
and



and dimples, a fine skin,—in fact a most enchanting creature. When she was able to converse, I found she had as many obligations to nature for her mind as her figure. She improved the favourable impression she had made on us every moment, and interested us to such a degree, that at night we parted with regret. The excessive melancholy that preyed on her mind, only rendered her beauty more touching. I could not sleep for thinking of her, she occupied my thoughts so fully. But it is time I should relieve you from the length of this letter, and conclude with all the &c. &c. &c.

LOUISA LUTON.

LETTER

## LETTER III.

DEAREST LOUISA,

YOUR letter has awakened in me all the curiosity of my sex; I am dying with impatience to hear something more of your fair fugitive; she must be uncommonly attractive to create so much admiration in the minds of people who see hundreds of beautiful women at every public place they go to. Ireland has been long famous for beauty; to eclipse them she must be a miracle of loveliness. Have pity, my dear, on your inquisitive friend, and tell me every thing you can about her in your next letter. To prove to you that in some measure I merit this indulgence, I will comply with your wish, and make you acquainted with one of my neighbours. My lord and I were walking some days ago in a wood, about a mile from our house; he was planning some alterations, and I was listening to his

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schemes;

schemes ; we were so much engrossed by the subject, that neither of us perceived a storm gathering until it was ready to fall, a frightful flash of lightning crossed our eyes, which was followed by a violent clap of thunder ; we made what haste we could into the thickest part of the wood, in hopes of being sheltered from the rain, which fell in torrents. We found a path, and following it, perceived that it led to the prettiest cottage I ever saw. A neat looking maid servant opened the door, and shewed us into a parlour simply furnished, but in which there was an excellent fire. The maid went out again, saying, she would let her mistress know we were here. In a few minutes the mistress appeared, with such an air of dignity, sweetly blended with mildness, as arrested our hearts from the first glance. I never saw so majestic a figure. She appears to be about sixty years old, tall, and rather thin, excessively pale, and a sedate manner which suits her figure admirably well. She must have been a beauty in her youth,



youth, but her present appearance implies respect and awe, more than that kind of admiration which mere beauty demands. On her first entrance she appeared very much embarrassed, but soon recovered herself, and shewed us every attention which true hospitality knew how to confer, yet seem itself the gainer. She assisted us in drying our cloaths, and politely lamented she could not accommodate us in a manner more suitable to our rank, and her wishes. She offered us every refreshment her cottage afforded, and seemed obliged by every mark of civility we accepted from her. During the course of our conversation she charmed us with the strength, clearness and good sense of her observations; she knows the world thoroughly, and I fear has felt its arrows.—My lord was delighted with her, and could have listened to her for hours! but night coming on, obliged us to return. We thanked our benefactress, and entreated the favour of her company at Emerton-Place; she very politely declined our invitation,

invitation, adding, that the company of a woman of her age would be rather an incumbrance than a pleasure, amongst a gay and youthful circle; but that the slight acquaintance she had with us, had inspired her with sentiments so favourable of us, that our happiness would always be dear to her. She walked with us to the edge of the wood; we repeated our entreaties that she should return our visit; she delicately, but steadily persevered in her refusal. My lord then requested she would inform us to whose hospitality we were so much indebted? she answered, that she was a widow, and that her name was Marley; then wishing each other a good night, we parted with unfeigned regret on our side, and apparent concern on her's. We did not ask leave to repeat our visit, being determined to go to the cottage again, and therefore would not run the risk of a refusal. We talked of her the whole way home; indeed we scarcely talked of any thing else until the arrival of

of your letter, which by producing a new wonder, furnished a fresh subject for speculation.

I am, my dear Louisa, your

HONORA EMERTON.

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L E T T E R . IV.

MY DEAREST LOUISA,

HOW could so great a treasure as your new acquaintance, remain within a mile of your house unknown to you? It has destroyed all my faith in the doctrine of sympathy. She must live a very recluse life, or else the people she conversed with are ignorant of her merit, otherwise you must have heard of her before.

I am so astonished and terrified, I hardly know what I am writing; but I must endeavour



deavour to recollect myself, to give you some idea of what has distracted my mind. This morning, while I was sitting writing the foregoing part of this letter, I was interrupted by a violent scream, which seemed to proceed from my mother's dressing-room. I ran thither, but guess my amazement at finding Laura fainting in my brother's arms; his eyes passionately fixed on her face; and my mother offering every possible assistance to restore her to life. After some time, she opened her lovely eyes, and soon recovering the use of her voice, cried in a tone that pierced my heart, "go, inhuman, leave me, are you determined to finish an existence you have already made wretched? most barbarous of men- be gone." She then relapsed into another fit which lasted near half an hour. Again her reason returned; she cast her eyes on my brother with such an expression of anguish, as would have softened the savage breast of a viper, strove to put him from her, and shuddered with a kind of horror in looking

ing at him. My mother then interposed, and obliged him to quit the room, which he very reluctantly did ; we had her carried to bed with all the symptoms of a fever, and sent for physicians to attend her. Our next care was to find my brother, that we might unfold this extraordinary affair, in which it is plain he is very deeply interested ; but he left the house without speaking to any person, and we did not know where to find him, as we believed him to be in America until this morning, when his sudden appearance created such an unexpected event : his leaving us so abruptly, was certainly to avoid the explanation we so ardently wished for.

Laura is much better this morning, her fever is abated, and she is much more composed, and is now in a quiet sleep : I have been sitting by her, my mind much occupied in endeavouring to account for the events of this day. I have puzzled myself to no manner of purpose ; I have  
revolved

revolved all the circumstances twenty times over, and yet am just where I began: it is however evident that my brother has been instrumental to her present misery; she looks on him with abhorrence, the sight of him is painful to her. I ask myself every instant, how he could contrive to make her hate him to such excess, but cannot answer my own questions. I wish for both our sakes I could tell you more of this affair, but as I can only repeat what I know, I will assure you that no one loves you better, than your

LOUISA LUTON.

LETTER



L E T T E R V.

Y O U R letter, my dear Louisa, has astonished me beyond measure; your brother's unexpected return, and the anguish Laura expressed at seeing him, are riddles that time alone can expound. I pity you and Mrs. Luton excessively; you must have suffered great anxiety of mind: I shall be very impatient for your next letter.

I have made another visit to Marley-Cottage, and am more than ever delighted with its respectable owner. I found her reading *L'Esprit de la Ligue*; a faint blush animated her face at my approach, but her countenance expressed so many different sensations at once, I could not determine to what account to place the colour which tinged her pale cheek. I made her an apology for waiting on her, without having previously asked her permission.

mission. She assured me with an air of sincerity, that she felt herself most excessively obliged to me, for thinking of her; that it was a favour she had ardently wished for, but dare not venture to solicit; that the very great difference of our situations seemed to place an unsurmountable bar between us; but that as she had not enjoyed so much pleasure for many years, as she does from the little acquaintance she had had with me, she flattered herself that I would manifest the goodness of my heart in devoting a leisure hour to constituting the happiness, and smoothing the declining path, of a poor old woman, who had not many days of her pilgrimage to complete. Louisa, there is something in her voice and manners so exquisitely touching, that every look, every accent, goes directly to my heart. She has read every thing worth attention; has great knowledge without a shadow of pedantry, though wonderfully well informed; she never mentions a book without obvious necessity for it; her conversation

versation is the refined essence of unlimited reading, which she manages so judiciously that one never feels hurt at the great superiority she possesses; she is the most sensible woman I ever met with; there is a delicacy and tenderness in her expressions peculiar to herself, and which seem to result from the genuine feelings of her heart. Night coming on obliged me to retreat; she accompanied me to the edge of the wood, then took an affectionate leave of me, saying that as I must be conscious of the delight she felt at seeing me, she would hope that pity might induce me to repeat my visit. We then parted; she stood at the entrance of the wood as long as I continued in sight, as if to take a last look, then waved a white handkerchief she had in her hand, and buried herself in the wood. My lord did not come for me, as he had some young companions with him, who, if they had discovered Marley Cottage, might have been troublesome to the amiable possessor. I therefore returned alone, and in my way  
 home



home I met one of the farmers who lived near the wood. I asked him if he had ever seen Mrs. Marley? He answered, that he had seen her at Church, and he believed unless it was to tend some sick body, she never went any where else; that her servants gave her a very good word, for being charitable to the poor and ordering for the sick, and that she was accounted very wise, for she was always reading. Finding he could give me no further information, I dismissed him and went into the house. I hope your young friend will be quite recovered before this letter reaches you, and that you may find a happy conclusion to your present uneasiness, is the sincerest wish of your

HONORA EMERTON.

P. S. I am going on a visit of a fortnight to a relation of my lord's, and shall hope to find a long packet from you at my return.

LETTER

## L E T T E R VI.

I AM so thoroughly acquainted with my dear Honora's sensibility, that I am convinced I cannot oblige her more than by informing her, that Laura has been pronounced out of danger by her physicians: my mother and I attended her with unremitting assiduity, until she was restored to health; would to heaven I could add to happiness also! But, alas! some secret melancholy presses upon her mind; there is a settled dejection in her countenance, which seems to flow from the deepest affliction. I am persuaded that hopeless love is the source of her grief, which to a heart like her's gives unutterable anguish. My mother's kindness appears to affect her excessively; she said this morning, that she should ever retain the most lively gratitude for her goodness towards a poor afflicted unprotected stranger;  
and

and added, that she felt the full value of the confidence my mother reposed in her, by permitting her to remain beneath her roof, and treating her with such uncommon marks of benevolence, after the scene to which she had been witness ; that in order to remove any impressions we might have conceived to her disadvantage, she entreated us to give her leave to tell the story of her life, every particular of which she would repeat to us ; this she hoped would convince us we had not thrown away our bounty upon a person unworthy of it ; she longed to remove every prejudice which we had so much apparent reason to entertain against her ; she was too much obliged to us to leave us any longer in doubt of who and what she was. She would have proceeded, but perceiving that the ardour with which she spoke exhausted her strength, my mother would not suffer her to speak, and assured her, that, far from adopting any ideas to her disadvantage, she only wished to see her health re-established,  
and



and was convinced she merited every attention in our power. She then begged she would compose herself to rest, which she is I hope at this moment enjoying; though the compassion and curiosity she has inspired me with, deprive me of the power of following the example. My maid tells me she asked yesterday for my brother, and when she was told no one knew where he was, she looked piteously and said, oh, that he had never seen my wretched face! then wept and wrung her hands in speechless agony, after which she sunk into a kind of stupor, as if the mind, unable to endure any longer so dreadful a conflict, had been for some moments suspended, in order to give it time to recover strength to grieve afresh.

What strange machines we are! adieu,  
my best Honora, and believe me your  
sincerely attached

LOUISA LUTON.

LETTER

## LETTER VII.

MY DEAREST HONORA,

I NOW have it in my power to satisfy your curiosity about my dear Laura. Poor girl, how my heart bleeds for her! but you must take her story in her own words. Figure to yourself the most beautiful woman which imagination can paint, with a voice filled with the most touching and pathetic tones, sitting between my mother and me on a sofa, and beginning her story in the following manner:—You will be rather surprised, ladies, to behold in me the grand-daughter of the Duke de V——, and as his conduct has been the original source of my misfortunes, I will begin with him my eventful story. He was a man of high birth, exalted rank, small fortune, and superlative pride, vain, ostentatious, arrogant and capricious.—He was equally incapable of leading a party,

party, or of submitting to be led by one, of course he was excluded from any share in the government, and from all hopes of increasing his patrimony by that means. The violence and insolence of his manners so highly offended the Duke de C——, who was soon after appointed Premier, that he opposed every application my grandfather made to the king, representing him to his majesty, as a man not only totally unfit for any sort of business, but a very dangerous person to employ. My grandfather deprived of every possibility of rising in France, would not offer his services to any other state, but retired to a castle he had in ——— where he devoted his time chiefly to wine and chess, both of which he was passionately fond of: his only society were dependants or parasites, who knowing no will but his, hurt his temper naturally fierce, and served still more to contract his mind, already soured by various disappointments. As he had never loved his wife, he lost her without even the ap-

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pearance



pearance of regret, his cold and consequently selfish heart could not feel the value of such an amiable woman, as I have heard she was; she left five sons, all minors, her whole attention had been directed to their education, and her tenderness in some degree softened to them the rigours they endured from their father. The only one of his sons that ever experienced the least care from him was his eldest, and that not so much from affection as ambition; he wished to support the antient splendor of his house, and he could only effect that by sacrificing all his younger sons. He therefore determined to enroll the two eldest in the army, and place the two youngest in the church—his eldest son resembled him so much in his disposition, that he entered with avidity into those projects formed to injure his younger brothers, and saw them all depart without a tear. My father was the youngest, he was sent to the convent of D——, where he was told he was to remain for life;—here he pursued his studies

studies with eagerness and success, but as his mind unfolded, he found an irresistible repugnance to that state of life, his father's unnatural ambition had destined him to. Every hour contributed to encrease his disgust, to a profession he was compelled to embrace—he lamented bitterly the want of that liberty, he found so beautifully described in books, and believed so essential to the happiness of a human creature.—Some years elapsed in this manner, when one morning the Duke sent for my father, and after some flattering speeches which he condescended to make him, on the progress which he had heard my father had made in his studies, and the improvements in his person, informed him that he must prepare immediately to take the irrevocable vows—My father charmed with the soothing beginning of the Duke's speech, heard the conclusion with horror—and for the first time in his life, dared, tho' in the mildest terms, to remonstrate and declare his abhorrence of a convent, and entreated he

might be permitted to follow his brothers in the army—where he might at least have a chance of getting rid of an existence he was weary of.—The Duke believing my father (like the rest of his brothers), would be all submission, was exasperated to find opposition, where he least expected it—his rage deprived him for some moments of the power of speaking—he at length found words sufficient to tell my father, that he would be obeyed—and assured him his resolution was so fixed, that no consideration on earth, should ever prevail on him to change it. As to his happiness or misery, it was a circumstance of small weight, when balanced with the dignity of his house, which could only be supported by his eldest brother possessing all the fortune of the family,—that he had already exhausted all their mother's interest, for the two sons placed in the army, and could not if he would serve my father in that line, without that money which he determined should all belong to his eldest son—that  
my



my father's resistance or complaints were equally unavailing, as his fate was unalterably fixed, and to-morrow morning he should set out for ——— never more to leave it. Notwithstanding the agony of my father's mind, he was forced to submit to the arbitrary commands of the Duke, out of whose breast ambition had eradicated every fibre of that paternal affection found amongst brutes and savages. He departed the following day for the convent of ———, where he was received with joy, and treated with the most soothing attention by the superior, who easily perceived he was not a self-devoted victim, and being a relation of his mother's, wished by every means in his power to reconcile him to a profession, which was unavoidable—But the superior's conduct produced an effect quite opposite to his intentions. My father looked upon all the kindness he met with from him, as art inculcated by his father's harsh commands, which rather increased than lessened his disgust—The gloomy stillness of  
every

every object that furrounded him, added to the melancholy of a mind naturally pensive and timid—and he pined in secret until his declining health gave evident proofs of the state of his mind—The superior alarmed to find him not only averse to a pious life, but very near falling a sacrifice to his aversion of it—wrote to the Duke, and informed him of the danger his son was in, and entreated him to change his design of making him a monk, as pursuing it would most probably be the young man's death, but the unnatural parent more enraged at the opposition to his will, than anxious for the preservation of the life of his amiable child,—breathed nothing but menaces against his unfortunate (and as he stiled him disobedient) son.

The superior, though a monk of a severe order, was neither a bigot nor devoid of humanity—he was excessively shocked at the Duke's conduct, reprobated his tyranny—pitied my father and allowed

lowed him much more liberty than any of the other young men in the same situation with him. Perhaps he believed the period of existence not far distant, and wished to soften the bitterness of his few remaining hours—One day as my father walked to and fro in the garden of the convent, he was struck with the sound of a voice he was well acquainted with—he listened attentively, and to his inexpressible joy, discovered that it was a young man who had been the partaker of all his pleasures in his boyish days—and now being grown up, was employed in the garden to cultivate herbs—he hastened to him, acquainted him with his situation, lamented in the most pathetic terms, the cruelty of his destiny,—painted with all the energy that a mind deeply wounded can express, his abhorrence of a religious life—and earnestly entreated him to assist him in obtaining his liberty. His knowledge of letters and total ignorance of the world, led him to believe he would easily find an opportunity of employing his talents.



lents for his support, and feared nothing but a disappointment of his scheme.—

The youth readily entered into his views, and promised to serve him to the utmost of his power—it was too late, and my father too weak, to undertake any thing that day, and they agreed to meet there the next day, and in the mean time form some plan for my father's escape—they then departed to avoid any suspicions which might arise from their being seen together. The idea of being released from so dreary a confinement, gave my father a degree of animation, he had been long a stranger to—he was congratulated on the improvement of his looks, which seemed to promise the recovery of his health, and spent the day in enthusiastic hopes and expectations. Next morning he repaired to the garden, where he found his faithful associate true to his appointment—who informed him with transports of joy, that he had brought with him a suit of his mother's cloaths, which he could easily put on over his own habit, and that

at

at the hour of dinner, he should dress in them, and go out of the garden, as if she had brought dinner to her son, and was returning home, and he could the more safely do this, as she frequently came in at one gate and went out at another—he farther told him there was a cavern in a rock, on the shore near his mother's, which he marked to him particularly, where he might lie concealed until he should come and find him, which should be as soon as it grew too dark to apprehend being seen. Hazardous however as this project might appear, my father embraced it eagerly, his ideas of happiness or misery were solely confined to a convent, and whose views extended no farther than bidding an eternal adieu to the unnatural tyranny of his austere father, and the fatiguing rigours of a monastic life; nor did he conceive any misfortune could be surpassed by those within the limits of walls so odious to him as those which confined him. At the time appointed clothed in his disguise,

guise, he presented himself at the gate as the old woman, and was permitted to go out without being questioned, he made a hasty march to the shore, and fortunately as he thought discovered the cavern in which he concealed himself, exulting in his escape, and longing ardently for night, that he might have his deliverer to thank, and to express to him the delight he felt at being free. Late in the evening he was dreadfully alarmed at the sound of several voices near him; as they approached his agony increased, he feared his retreat had been discovered by the Duke, and supposed he should be dragged like a criminal before his enraged father. Whilst he was making these conjectures, three men armed entered the cavern, and seeing him in the old woman's cloaths, demanded who he was, and what tempted him to profane their sanctuary. My father without answering their questions, asked if they had been sent to seek for him by the Duke de ———'s orders? they replied they know no such person, and



and very far from having come to look for him, that they were grieved to find any one there, one of them added that since the old lady had taken up her abode there, she must take a jaunt with them, as the only certain means of preventing her from blabbing. My father perceiving they were determined to carry him with them, threw himself on their mercy, confessed his situation to them, and added if they deemed him worthy to be enrolled in their number, he should think himself but too happy. He was immediately admitted, and was employed in assisting the men who first found him, and about fifty others, in putting some merchandize on board a large boat, they all afterward embarked and rowed with considerable swiftness to a ship, which lay to at some distance from the shore, into which the merchandize, sailors, my father, and after all, the boat were stowed, then spreading their sails, they soon lost sight of land. Just as the sun rose, my father then began to breath, believing himself

himself safe from pursuit, or the possibility of being overtaken by any of his relations. He then began to make some observations on the people around him, but judge what his sensations must have been, on discovering them to be smugglers; a thousand dreadful consequences presented themselves to his imagination concerning his honor, and the disgraceful exit he might make hereafter, but there was now no remedy—any thing was better in his acceptation than the convent—even the rope appeared less horrid when contrasted with that gloomy retreat.—Hope natural to a youthful mind, soon banished these painful sensations, he flattered himself some opportunity would offer of disengaging himself when they landed, and finding they were bound for America, resigned himself to his fate with great tranquillity. After several weeks voyage without any accident, they landed, and as my father had served them as clerk, they with a liberality becoming better people, gave him fifty guineas, and  
every

every necessary he could immediately want—nor were they offended at his leaving them, as they proposed returning to France, where they were sure my father could not go without evident danger to himself, and might even be a means of encreasing theirs. They had many connections in the town of ———, and thro' some of them, got my father introduced and recommended to Mr. Levingston, a capital merchant, who had come from Boston there, on some business, who accepted him. The smugglers after having seen him established, took leave of him with as much concern as they were capable of. Mr. Levingston was settling some affairs at ——— in which he employed my father, who acquitted himself in the ablest manner, and every day gained ground in his patron's opinion.

My father was naturally a very sensible man, and in the course of his studies, had read upon a variety of subjects. He had an excellent though not a minute memory,



mory, and being relieved from the horrors  
 of perpetual imprisonment, his conversa-  
 tion was animated, and his manners  
 chearful, his person handsome, his air in-  
 teresting, and his whole deportment that  
 of a young person of fashion. His ap-  
 pearance was so much superior to his situ-  
 ation, that Mr. Levingston, who was an  
 indolent man, and was consequently very  
 much charmed with any one who had the  
 power of amusing him, treated my fa-  
 ther with the familiar confidence of a  
 friend, and often obliged others to per-  
 form the task he would not permit him  
 to execute, preferring the pleasure of his  
 conversation to the convenience of his  
 service. As soon as he had finished the  
 affairs which had called him from home,  
 he returned to Boston, and introduced  
 my father to his only daughter, as a friend  
 he highly esteemed, for the amiable qua-  
 lities he possessed. Laura Levingston was  
 then seventeen years old, her form was  
 an elegant dwelling worthy of the soul  
 which was enshrined in it, the ineffable  
 sweetness.

sweetness of her manners arrested the soul, while the eye was enchanted by her beauty.—She constituted the delight of her father, the admiration of her acquaintance, and the adoration of all the youths that approached her—What an object for my father's unpractised heart, overflowing with sensibility, and capable of the most exquisite sensations!

Her mother had been an English woman, of good family, great genius and extensive knowledge. Her conversation was not merely books, but the essence of them conveyed in mild instructive language. She undertook the education of her daughter, and would have completed it, if it had pleased heaven to spare her life, but she died when Laura was only fourteen years old. This misfortune made so deep an impression on Mr. Livingston's mind, that his friends could never induce him to listen to any suggestions which led to a second engagement. All his hopes, wishes and affections, centered in

in his daughter, to raise her to the highest dignity possible was his darling scheme.—There were no titles in America, for which he had uncommon predilection, he therefore proposed taking her to England, where he could easily get her introduced by her mother's relations, into the first circles of company. Her fortune which was immense, he knew would attract many admirers, her beauty and merit, he flattered himself many more, and with all these advantages, he did not doubt being able to marry her to gratify his ambition, and her own heart. These were his sentiments when he brought my father to Boston, and presented him to his daughter.—My father was struck with Miss Levingston's beauty, and loved her from the first instant he beheld.—His heart for some time imposed upon his reason, it was friendship to Mr. Levingston, it was gratitude for his goodness, that led him to seek every opportunity of pleasing a person the old gentleman doated on—however reluctant to give credit, the fatal



fatal truth at last appeared too plainly.— How did he condemn himself, and for the first time, regret even the dreary limits of his Convent! All the former rigour of his fate had been the work of others,—here alone he was culpable,—plunged into an abyss, from which he had not power to extricate himself, he flew to Miss Livingston's society to banish those torturing reflections. Some time passed without her observing his attachment, so very delicate were the attentions he paid her, but his anxiety about the smallest trifle she seemed to approve, his being always of her opinion on every subject, and a thousand little assiduities which lovers even without being conscious of them practice, persuaded her of the power she had over him. His respectful conduct gained her esteem, while a variety of little services that indirectly informed her of his passion, flattered her self-love. Every effort she perceived in him to conceal the anguish which preyed upon his mind, made a deep impression on her's, and

and served him more effectually than the most studied addresses could have done; and her heart, a traitor to its mistress, surrendered itself a prisoner, without making the least resistance.—Mr. Livingston often observed my father buried in thought, and apparently very wretched: delicacy prevented him from enquiring into the cause of his dejection, yet he often endeavoured to amuse him, and banish those painful reveries. My father, touched by his goodness, was frequently upon the point of throwing himself at the feet of this worthy man, and unfolding the state of his mind to him, and paint the remorse with which his breach of the confidence reposed in him hourly reproached him. But love, seducing pleader, represented the loss of Miss Livingston, as the certain consequence of such a step, and she was the whole universe for him. One cannot avoid censuring my father's conduct upon this occasion, as ungenerous and ungrateful, yet it may be urged in his favour; that love of all the passions  
of

of the human mind enervates it the most, and renders it incapable of making any vigorous efforts in opposition to its wishes. Flight in such a case is the only security, and my father had no place to fly to——no parental roof, no friendly dwelling to receive him. Whatever resolutions he might make of avoiding her in his absence, the moment she appeared they were all banished. As soon as the lovers came to an explanation, my father silenced his scruples by the idea of betraying her, which his passion represented to him as a baseness unworthy of a man. How could he expose her to the just resentment of an enraged father?——Love, honour, every worthy sentiment opposed such a discovery. He had no apprehensions from rivals, as he was certain of his mistress's heart, and she had the liberty of rejecting those she did not approve, as her father wished to establish her in England. Things were in this situation when one of the clerks, who had often been obliged to execute my father's

proportion



proportion of the business (while Mr. Levingston detained him as his companion), hated him through envy, and sought every opportunity possible to injure him. However cautious the lovers believed they had been, this man had observed their growing affection. He watched them attentively, and having one evening overheard their conversation, was sufficiently informed to ruin my father completely. He went directly to Mr. Levingston, and under the specious appearance of zeal, repeated all that he had heard, adding his own observations and his sorrow, that Mr. Valere (that name my father had assumed) should be guilty of such base ingratitude, towards the kindest and best of Masters, nor did he omit one circumstance, which could tend to blacken my father, or deepen the shades of his character. Mr. Levingston's usual mildness forsook him, he raved like a lunatic. He sent for his daughter, and in a torrent of invectives against her and Valere, convinced her he had been informed of the whole

whole affair.—He observed the enormity of their conduct in a point of view she had never seen it in. She stood motionless between terror and astonishment—Shocked at herself, and dreading the consequences for Valere, yet unable to offer one syllable even to entreat pardon, at last he ordered her to leave him, she attempted to speak but could not, and it was with some difficulty she reached her apartment. Mr. Levingston then called Valere; the trembling victim no sooner appeared, than Mr. Levingston began to upbraid him in the bitterest terms. My father self-condemned did not undertake the smallest justification, his contrition only appeared in tears, sighs, and pathetic silence. The first transports of Mr. Levingston's anger, being succeeded by grief, he asked in a tone which would have pierced a harder heart than my father's, what he would say in his own vindication—Alas, sir, answered my father, I have not one palliation to offer—Doomed from my birth to misery, my life has been

been a continued series of misfortunes, and I have now filled up the measure of them, by the basest ingratitude to you, thou best and kindest of men. Had my father been like you, I never should have stood in the predicament I do at this moment—his delight was punishment not mercy. He then recited every particular of his father's treatment of him and every circumstance of his situation, adding the real name of his family, and their place of residence, and concluded with requesting Mr. Levingston would take the trouble of enquiring into the truth of what he had asserted.

His patron heard his story with anxious attention : his being son to one of the oldest families in France, was a powerful advocate in my father's favour, and reduced his presumption in looking up to Miss Levingston, and during the recital of his story, he appeared so touched with grief, for the breach of hospitality he had been guilty of, that it gave Mr. Levingston



ston a good opinion of his heart. The extent of his education, added strength to his assertions relative to his birth. Mr. Levingston, therefore, only coldly said, he should send him next day to transact some business for him, at a place about fifty miles distant. Next morning my father was obliged to depart without seeing Miss Levingston—Those only who love, know how to pity his situation.—Mr. Levingston had many correspondents in France, and some near the Duke de S——. He wrote to them requesting they would make all the enquiries necessary for his satisfaction, their answers exceeded even his hopes. He was not only assured that every word my father had said was true, but that he was presumptive heir to the Dukedom, as two of his brothers had fallen in battle, the eldest in a duel, and the fourth was of so feeble a constitution, that there were little hopes of his life; that the Duke had made the most diligent search after the youngest son, who was his only remaining hope,

that

that he was struck with horror at the fate of his children, whom he had compelled into professions contrary to their inclinations, which had ended so fatally, for which he condemned himself, and as he found he was near his end, he wished for his youngest son to close his eyes, and pay the attention due to the declining health of his other son, who had never been well from the time his cruelty had compelled him to become a monk. Mr. Levingston's correspondents discovered the young man who had assisted my father in his escape, and by him they sent all the above information, and so perfectly well authenticated, as not to admit of a doubt. As soon as he had examined all the proofs, and been thoroughly convinced of their reality, he sent for his daughter, whom he had not seen since the discovery of her love. He asked her mildly the true state of her heart, and if she really thought Valere could make her happy for life. She answered her happiness must depend on her father's approbation, for  
 though

though Valere was dearer to her than life, she could sooner resign him, than plunge a dagger in her father's heart. Mr. Levingston assured her, she had his permission to marry Valere, if she thought him worthy of her; that she knew he had always esteemed him and now wished him for his son. At first she doubted the reality of her father's words, but at last gave herself up to the most charming hopes. She had neither heard of or from Valere, since that night they looked upon as fatal to their hopes, but which had so very different effects from what they dreaded. Things were in this state when Valere returned. He sent in his name to Mr. Levingston, who immediately went out to meet him with his usual cordiality. While they were speaking, my father perceived the youth, who had assisted his escape from France, he flew instantly into his arms, asked him so many questions, he had not time to answer one. At last recollecting Mr. Levingston, he blushed and begged pardon, for being so inattentive. Mr.

D

Levingston



Levingston was overjoyed to find this last circumstance so strongly confirming all the rest. He took Valere by the hand, and brought him into the room where Miss Levingston was, who did not attempt to conceal the joy she felt at seeing him. My father was all amazement, he expected to be forbid the house, and treated with that contempt his conduct merited. He found every thing exactly opposite from what he had imagined. After a long pause Mr. Levingston told him, that he had enquired into what he had advanced with regard to his family, that he had found it to be exactly true; that as he had been so fortunate as to gain his daughter's heart, he would add to it the gift of her hand, and that he was at liberty to address her with her father's approbation. Words could but weakly convey an idea of my father's transports. Miss Levingston smiled through a rosy blush, and all was gratitude, harmony, and rapture, and in a few weeks they were united. It may perhaps appear surprising,

prising, that a rich merchant should bestow an only daughter, with an immense fortune, on an indigent young man of rank, but then it should be considered, how many motives concurred to forward this step. Mr. Levingston was by nature much more inclined to ambition, than avarice, my father's merit and the excellence of his understanding, made him a most desirable companion, his earnestness to please, his studious attention to those affairs which were committed to his care, and the affection he felt and frequently expressed for Mr. Levingston, made the deepest impression on the mind of that gentleman, and his leaving himself entirely at his mercy, with regard to his love, was another motive to stimulate Mr. Levingston's generosity, of which few men possessed more. Some weeks after their marriage, my father sent Le Jeune (the young person who assisted him to escape) to France, to enquire into the state of his family, who soon after returned with an account of the death of

his brother, and the rapid decline of the old Duke who longed to see my father, and beg his pardon before he died. My father went immediately to him, but the Duke survived his arrival but a few hours, leaving my father little more than his castle, all the rest of his fortune having been dissipated by the wild extravagance of his son. My father returned to America, where he took his title and family name, which was Verneuil, and with my mother and grandmother, passed many years. They had four children, two sons and one daughter, elder than me; my sister was called Maria, I was called Laura, after my mother, who devoted the greatest part of her time, to the education of her children. Maria was the most perfect beauty I ever beheld, and as amiable as she was lovely. My brothers were handsome, sensible, and pleasing; the tenderest friendship united us all, and our infancy passed rapidly away in a series of uninterrupted felicity. The first grief I ever experienced was the death



death of my beloved grandfather, who doated on me with partial fondness.—I thought at that time no future calamity could afflict me more, but I have since found I was egregiously mistaken, and that his death was only a prelude to sharper and still greater misfortunes. About this time a war with England was determined on, Boston was no longer a place of safety, my father found means to transmit a great part of his property to France, and some more to Holland, and would have gone to settle at his family castle in France, if my mother could have been persuaded to leave America, but her terror of the sea was so great, that neither the dangers that furrounded her, nor the entreaties of her family, were able to induce her to venture on that element. This reduced him to the necessity of going to reside at a house he had about twenty miles distant from Boston, where we spent two years in tranquillity, during which time, my father had been frequently solicited to declare his political sentiments,

, and

and join one or other of the contending parties, but he persisted in the most exact neutrality, saying he was a Frenchman, and did not belong to either of the contending parties. and as he was only a shallow politician, flattered himself that matters might yet be accommodated between England and her Daughter, and as that appeared to him to be the real interest of both, he did not reflect that the fire of rebellion once lighted, is only to be extinguished in blood. My eldest brother tired of remaining an idle spectator, while war raging on every side, seemed to claim his sword, being urged by some young friends of his to espouse the cause of England, joined the king's army. This step was considered by the adherents to Congress, as a declaration of the sentiments of the whole family, and we were accordingly ranked among the royalists. There are in every large society of men, some few hot-headed zealots, who in defiance of every law human or divine, think the more mischief they can do their enemies,

enemies, though by the most unjustifiable means, the more they recommend themselves to their own party. Some of these furious ones vowed vengeance against us, and swore to make the father an example in revenge for the perfidy of the son—when once a malicious design is formed, the execution is generally very easy. My father's house was spacious, and covered a large piece of ground, to make our ruin compleat, one night it was set on fire in five places at the same time, we were all asleep insensible of our danger, and should certainly have perished in the flames, if a foraging party belonging to the royalists had not come to our relief. I was waked with the dismal cry of fire, fire, on every side. I started from my bed, huddled on some cloaths, and opened my door, but the flame and smoke rushed in with such fury, that I fainted with terror. I knew no more of what passed in the house, but when I recovered, I found myself in the open air, wrapped in a great coat, and leaning on the

the



the breast of an officer, who was using every means he could devise to bring me to life, he held a bottle of salts to my nose with one hand, while he supported me with the other. Never can I forget the look of tender anxiety painted in his expressive countenance, it fully convinced me he was interested in my safety. I endeavoured to withdraw myself from his arms, but he would not permit me, saying the fright was too much for my weak spirits, and for this once I must allow him to dispute my will. I blushed and remained with him until the fire was extinguished, which by the very great activity of the soldiers, was happily effected without doing much damage, having only destroyed the roof of the wing, in which we were lodged. We therefore returned to the house, our spirits very much agitated by the fright, and all laughed as if it had been a comical adventure we had been engaged in: when I was somewhat more composed, I examined my deliverer with more attention. Fatal curiosity! I found

found him handsome, elegant and polished, soft insinuating manners, an address in which grace and dignity were most happily blended. His beauty, though superior to any man's I have ever seen, was his least advantage, my mind was filled with a sentiment quite new to me, I felt a sweet sensation which I believe commonly accompanies the dawn of love, but it rendered me so timid, though I died to know his name, (who had rescued me from one danger, only to involve me in another), I did not dare to ask it, and when I had heard one of the officers with him, call him —, I rejoiced at merely knowing his name, as if it had been a real advantage to me to have known it. As soon as breakfast was removed the gentlemen departed, with the liveliest gratitude on our side, and the warmest congratulations on theirs. They left us a guard of soldiers, with an officer to protect us from future insults. I was grieved to find Mr. Mortimer was not the person. As soon as I had lost sight of him, I went

to shut myself up alone, that I might be at liberty to indulge myself in a charming reverie. Wholly occupied by the new idea which filled my mind, I recollected every syllable I heard him pronounce, dwelt with rapture on the soothing tender expressions of concern he employed, while he believed me insensible, and felt with thrilling transport, that his eyes were much more expressive than his tongue. I became a new being, and seemed to tread in air, every object around me borrowed embellishment from the animation of my feelings. The hurry, confusion, and apprehension occasioned by the fire, prevented the change in my manner from being remarked by any one, I longed impatiently to see him again, and was convinced he would avail himself of the pressing invitation my father had given him, and seize the first opportunity of seeing me, with eagerness equal, if not superior, to my own. Every hour appeared an age to me, and as I had no fixed notion of the time of his return, I  
grew



grew fretful, peevish, and unfociable.— My mother at last remarked a change in my manner, which alarmed her tenderness for my health, this observation terrified me, and made me endeavour to be more chearful, but the anxiety of my mind, baffled all my efforts. Mortimer's figure was ever before my eyes, and as some palliation of my weakness, I will endeavour to describe that figure, which made an impression upon my mind, that death alone can erase. He was tall, rather slender, and finely proportioned,—his face oval, a profusion of beautiful dark brown hair, shaded a smooth and well formed forehead, which was marked with straight eye-brows, the colour of his hair, very large dark eyes, which were so expressive, that they told the subject he was going to speak upon, before his tongue would utter it—a Grecian nose, teeth whiter than ivory, a pretty mouth, frequently adorned with the most seducing smiles, and a mingled expression of sense, softness, and manly dignity, rendered

rendered him (at least to my heart), irrefutable.

Some days of painful suspense elapsed. I felt humbled and mortified at this delay: It is too plain he does not love me, said I; how weak, how absurd, ever to have hoped, he would remember me more! I fancied every person that looked at me could read my thoughts, and trembled at the idea of their being discovered. Ingrossed by these painful reflections, I was sitting in the drawing-room, touching the keys of the harpsichord in a pensive manner, when the door opened; judge of my surprize and joy, on hearing Mr. Mortimer announced, my agitation was so great, he must have perceived it, but with a delicacy, peculiar to himself, supposing my embarrassment arose from the half-dressed situation he found me on the night of the fire, avoided that subject. Though from every circumstance, it was the one, which most obviously presented itself for discussion; he made recitals

citals of the manner in which the military affairs were conducted by the Royalists, public news, and even touched upon politics, until I had entirely regained my composure. Never did man practice more refined assiduities to engage a woman's heart ; mine was wholly his : he became a frequent visitor at my father's house, and after having gained my consent, easily obtained the approbation of my family to make me his : his fortune and family in England were so considerable, as to satisfy a more ambitious people than we were ; his merit was unquestioned, and his name seldom pronounced without an eulogium ; he spent every moment with me that he could spare from his duty, and we only waited the end of the campaign to be united. In the course of his visits, he often brought some of his brother officers with him, by my father's express desire ; among the rest, he presented a Mr. James to me, under the title of his particular friend. I received him as such, and treated him with that

attention



attention which I thought due to the friend of a man, who was so soon to be my husband. This Mr. James was very handsome, his conversation was lively and seducing, and he possessed the power of suiting it, to the taste of every person he conversed with. Highly polished and insinuating, he charmed every one, yet under the plausible mask, he concealed a fierce, unmanageable spirit, and a base designing heart. From his first entrance into our family, he paid me marked attention, which I attributed to his regard for Mortimer. Totally free from art, and consequently from suspicion, I never once penetrated his designs, nor were any of my family more clear-sighted, so perfect a master was he in the practice of dissimulation, that no doubts were entertained to his prejudice by any one of our society, who were all charmed with his vivacity, and delighted with his spirit.

The time of my marriage with Mr. Mortimer was fixed, and he obtained a  
month's

month's leave of absence, to settle every thing previous to it with my father; he had been but five days with us, accompanied by his friend James, when he received a letter from his commander, revoking his leave of absence, and commanding him to join his regiment immediately; he brought this letter to me, and begged I would peruse it; he seemed as much surprized as chagrined at so unexpected an order, and said, he certainly owed it to the malice of some secret enemy, for as it was winter, and every thing quiet, there could be no real cause for recalling him; it was however absolute, and he must go; he did every thing the tenderest love could suggest to condole me, assuring me, it was to be the last time we should separate, that he would return with a lover's speed to my feet, and that my father had promised, that our next meeting should be the day of our union. Though he strove to comfort me, his countenance expressed the deepest melancholy; I endeavoured,

though

though with little success, to conceal my anguish, and feared increasing by my grief, the anxiety of him, whom I loved more than life. At length, with the greatest reluctance he tore himself from me; when he was gone, I indulged my tears, which flowed so fast, that I could not go down to breakfast; a thousand gloomy presages haunted my startled imagination, and I remained occupied by a dismal train of dreary ideas, until I was summoned to dinner; on going into the parlour, my astonishment was excessive at finding Mr. James there, (who I supposed had accompanied Mortimer) with an air so gay and happy as piqued me, and I reproached him with indifference toward his friend. Angelic Laura, answered he, how much resentment heightens your beauty already too destructive; but my dear little moralist, if you imagine that either friendship or love are immortal, you will find yourself deceived, and I deplore the disappointments so sanguine a disposition is preparing for you. I was  
so



so much offended at his sentiments, and his manner of expressing them, that I did not deign to answer him; my heart revolted against him, and from that moment I considered him as a secret enemy; he placed himself next me at table, and strove with great address to regain the place he perceived he had lost in my opinion, but in vain; he grew every moment less guarded, and in a few days boldly threw off the mask, and declared himself my lover. Exasperated at a conduct, at once so base and cruel, I threatened to expose him to Mortimer's just resentment. He smiled maliciously, and asked me if he did not wear a sword as well as Mortimer, and added, despair will aid my arm, then seizing one of my hands, he kneeled on one knee, and swore solemnly, that whoever possessed me, must cut their way to me through his heart, as he never would resign me but with life; it is therefore in your power, too beautiful form, to reconcile all parties and save the man you love; for believe me,

if

if you reject my suit,—he dies. I trembled so violently, that had my existence depended on it, I could not articulate a syllable; my sister's coming into the room, relieved me from the most wretched situation; we could neither of us answer her enquiries; conscious guilt closed his lips, and an agony of terror mine. She took my hand, and led me to my room, more dead than alive, they put me to bed, where I remained several hours, insensible to the misery of my fate. On coming to myself, I found my father sitting by my bedside, holding one of my hands, and bathing it with his tears—he tenderly entreated me to tell him, what had disturbed me to such a degree? I told him in a few words, the scene which had passed between Mr. James and me, and my distraction on Mortimer's account. He entered with tenderness into my fears, and said, he would himself punish his treachery, as soon as he had conveyed me safe to Mortimer, and on my expressing my apprehensions on his account

count, he begged I would dismiss my fears, for a man, who could be capable of such baseness, was not an enemy to be feared in the field ; he then desired me to hold myself in readiness to attend him at an instant's warning, dressed in a riding-habit. I was a remarkably good horse-woman, and had a very fine fleet horse. I dressed myself as he desired, and waited for him with an anxiety and impatience scarcely credible ; at length the clock struck one, all the family were usually in bed at that hour, every moment encreased my apprehensions, until at last, my father softly opened the door, and without pronouncing one word, took my hand, and led me into the garden, and from thence to a gate at some distance from the house, where we found Le Fevre by my father's appointment, with our horses waiting for us ; we mounted them in profound silence, and had proceeded some miles before we ventured to speak. The night was as light as day, and excessively cold, but as we rode very fast, we did not suffer from it.

When



When we had gone about twenty miles, we came in sight of the camp, and soon after were challenged by one of the centinels : fortunately for us, an officer, that had often visited us with Mr. Mortimer, was that moment examining the outposts, he knew us, and undertook to bring us safe to the person we wanted, and in a few minutes, I found myself in my dear Mortimer's arms ; he was astonished at seeing me, but his joy so much surpassed his surprize, that it was a long while before he thought of asking me, if he did not owe his present happiness to some accident ; my father, who expected this question, answered, that he did, for that he had received information, that his enemies had determined to fire his house a second time, and that as my younger brother had attended my mother on a visit to a sick friend, and my eldest brother was maintaining his post in the army, he thought the care of my sister quite sufficient for a man of his age, besides, he had promised to give him Laura,

and

and was resolved to keep his word, and was determined to have us married immediately : Mortimer was in raptures at his unexpected happiness, as he called it ; the chaplain of the regiment performed the ceremony ; my father embraced me affectionately, and soon after returned home, as he said, to my sister ; a latent grief preyed on my heart ; I dreaded my dear father's meeting with Mr. James, and though the commander in chief gave us a splendid entertainment with music, and every polite proof of attention possible, yet nothing could dispel the sickly sadness I felt at my heart. There were several ladies of the party, and when we retired from the gentlemen, they made parties of cards, I was engaged in one of them, when an officer hastily opened the door, and asked which was Mrs. Mortimer ? my countenance answered, before I could pronounce a word : Madam, said he, it is with deep affliction I must tell you, that Mr. Mortimer has sent me to bring you to receive his last breath ; I

heard

heard no more, but followed him to the shore ; Heavens ! what a sight of horror was presented to me ! the man on whom my soul doated, lay on the strand, weltering in his blood, his face pale, his lips quivering, his eyes sunk, and his voice so faint, that I could hardly hear it ; the accursed James was standing by him, his sword still wet, with the blood of my only treasure ; I saw the sight, and yet live ; pardon me, dearest ladies, said Mrs. Mortimer, (as she wiped the tears, that rolled in abundance down her pale, but beautiful cheeks,) I have affected you too much ; we begged she would proceed, which she did, after a few minutes pause. I acted a thousand wild extravagancies in the agony of distress I felt, until Mortimer's feeble voice arrested my attention. I leaned my ear almost close to his lips, and heard distinctly these words : Dearest and best of women, my first and only love, you are the blameless cause of my death, but if you love me, as I have loved you, no power

on



on earth will prevail on you to reward my murderer with your hand; remember me to your whole house, farewell! the last words were hardly articulate, and he expired in my arms! What became of me afterwards, I know not; the first recollection I have of myself, after that fatal moment, was on board a ship, in the state cabin, There was a woman of a good appearance, that seemed appointed to wait on me; I asked her some questions, but she would not answer them; some time after I heard a violent noise, she appeared terrified to death; I asked her what she feared? she said an engagement was going to begin, between the ship we were in and another, and that she feared either death or slavery; we both prayed, but our petitions were quite opposite; she prayed for life, and I for death, as the last and only resource from the torture of mind I felt; the canonnade began, I pitied the terrors of my companion, though I did not share them, and said what I could

could to comfort her ; after the engagement had lasted some time, we heard the clashing of swords, and soon after a cry of quarter on all sides, my companion was fainting with fear, when our cabin door was burst open, and some rough sailors brought us upon deck, where the first object that struck my view was Mr. James, who had dislocated his shoulder by a fall, as I heard, and they were carrying him to the Surgeons. I had no time for reflection, as they made me go on board a small yawl, that lay at the side of the vessel, and brought me to shore. The yawl had a great deal of merchandize on board, which they seemed to prize highly ; I was considered as of little value, and sent to the good woman who brought me here. How shall I describe my feelings on finding Mr. James in your room ? for some moments I was ungrateful to your goodness, for a life grown odious to me : Where shall I hide my wretched head ? what will become of

of me? who can shelter me from a man of his outrageous temper? Again she wept; my mother said every thing possible to sooth her, and assured her of protection, even against her own son; Laura asked her with a faltering voice, if Mr. James was my brother? on being answered in the affirmative, her beautiful features underwent a variety of changes, and her distress seemed (if possible) to augment; but upon repeated assurances of affection and protection from us both, she seemed more composed. Her spirits are greatly agitated by the least noise; every time the door is opened, she casts a fearful eye at it, as if she expected my brother to enter in. We are all surprized he has not made some effort to see her, or learn something about her, but as yet we have not heard any thing of him. Now, my dearest Honora, what would you think of Warley Cottage as an Asylum for Laura, it is so remote from observation, that I do not think she would be discovered

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covered, until we hear from her American friends, to whom she has wrote several letters, some of them near a month ago. If you can persuade the amiable owner to receive the afflicted fugitive, let me have an immediate answer, as we dread every moment, some desperate step may be taken by my (I am sorry to call him) Brother:

My ever dear Honora,

Believe me your's,

LOUISA LUTON.

LETTER

## L E T T E R VIII.

DEAR LOUISA,

THE moment I had read yours, I went to Warley Cottage, I put the packet into Mrs. Warley's hands, and begged she would read it, and that I would stroll into the garden, and amuse myself until she had finished it ; after she had perused it, she came to look for me. I perceived the traces of tears on her face, she could hardly conceal the agitation she felt, it was quite unnecessary to urge your request, she appeared most anxious to embrace this child of misfortune ; the unfortunate, said she, have claims upon every good mind, but upon those who have experienced the sharp arrows of affliction, those claims are double. Alas ! madam, said she, with a sigh, which seemed to pierce her heart, I had a daughter, that I once considered as a blessing,

but she is lost to me, and this dear girl must be mine by adoption; we will pour out our sorrows together, and if her's can admit of any mitigation, nothing on my part shall be wanting to soften them, mine can only end with my weak frame, which heaven be praised, I feel every day growing more feeble, and approaching to my only place of repose. But I am running into the garrulity of age, and affecting your spirits too much, let us only think on the means of bringing the young lady here. We talked on the subject for some time and then parted. My Lord has undertaken to convey Laura to Mrs. Warley with such caution, as shall elude the utmost vigilance, and make a pursuit impossible; he will be with you to-morrow evening, I beg you will love him, for the sake of

HONORA EMERTON.

LETTER



## L E T T E R IX.

LOUISA,

I have a mind to be angry, you promised to fend us a pretty young woman, and behold a being of superior order. I never beheld such elegance, dignity, and grace, united with perfect loveliness. Language cannot paint her, it only gives a flight sketch, therefore upon recollection I forgive you, as words were the only medium you could describe her through; I was sitting with Mrs. Warley, when my Lord entered, leading in this miracle of beauty, I offered her my hand, but Mrs. Warley clasped her to her bosom, come, said she, to my arms, thou sweet daughter of affliction, I am perhaps more unfortunate than you are, and if I cannot lessen your grief, I will share it with you. She then kissed Laura's cheek—they both wept ;

wept; my Lord wiped from either eye a manly tear, I cried, and Laura sobbed aloud, at length Laura turned to me, and would have made me a thousand acknowledgments, but I intreated she would not, and as soon as she was a little more composed, my Lord and I left them to the unrestrained indulgence of their sorrows. I shall visit them very soon again, I feel an interest in Mrs. Warley's fate that I cannot account for, she has promised me a recital of her adventures some time or other, and I am all impatience to hear it.

I am your's,

HONORA EMERTON.

LETTER

## L E T T E R X.

DEAREST HONORA,

M Y revered benefactress will, I am convinced, be happy to hear, that I am as comfortable as the miserable state of my mind will suffer me to be. Mrs. Warley is all goodness to me, at one time she soothes me, at another, she assures me, that I have not suffered so much as she has ; yesterday she opened a small cabinet, which stands in the parlour, and shewing me a manuscript, told me it contained the particulars of her life, that I should read them, and decide from them, which of us was most unfortunate. I asked her permission to transcribe them for you, who, I assured her, were interested for her, from the Countess of Emerton's account of her ; she answered, that she had now no motive for concealing any thing which related to her, and that she  
would



would allow me, when my spirits would permit, to write it for you ; I have been some days very much occupied in transcribing it, and hope to send it to you next post, as a small proof of that gratitude which is due to you, from your affectionate and grateful,

LAURA LEVINGSTON.

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L E T T E R X I.

DEAREST HONORA,

I sent yesterday, to enquire, according to your directions, for letters for you, but not one has been received, nor has the least enquiry been made after you at my nurse's ; this morning there was a note delivered to me, informing me, that Mr. Luton was delirious in a fever, at an Hotel, in Capel-street ; I immediately  
 shewed

shewed this note to my mother, she instantly sent her family physician to him, who returned in about an hour, and assured us, that his life was in great danger, that the day he went there, which we found to be the one, on which we had seen you, he appeared on going in, to be intoxicated with wine, but as it was morning, the people of the house were very much at a loss what to think about him; in less than an hour, he grew quite outrageous, they had him fastened in bed, and sent for a physician, who told he was in a violent fever; he could not give any account of himself, nor were there any papers in his pockets, which could give them the least information; they shewed him to a great number of gentlemen, but for many days, not one of them knew him; at last, a gentleman who had known him in America, upon seeing him, told them who he was, and that he had a mother and sister in Dublin, of whom he had often heard him speak, but could not tell where to find

them ; at length with difficulty they found us out, and during this interval, had every possible care taken of him ; my mother forgot her anger, and flew to him, she found him worse than had been represented, he did not know her, and was much too ill to be removed. What his fate will be, heaven only knows ! but you are at present free from any apprehensions on his account. Adieu, dearest Laura, love me, although I subscribe myself,

LOUISA LUTON.

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I inclose my dear Honora Mrs. Warley's story. What painful circumstances have marked her innocent life ! She has not mentioned her daughter's name. I think if she could read her mother's story unmoved, she must be more or less than a human creature ; but read it, and judge for yourself ; it has deranged my feelings



feelings so totally, that I am unable to add a line on any other topic. I intreat you to believe me eternally your

LOUISA LUTON.

*Mrs. WARLEY'S STORY.*

I HAVE so often attempted to banish the recollection of past events, that it requires some consideration, to arrange the principal ones of my life, so as to make a connected story of them, and I almost fear, that I shall stand accused of vanity, when I relate some circumstances, I cannot pass over. The only palliation for them is, that what I then was, I claim no merit from to-day, and only look upon it as the source of that bitter anguish, which has marked my declining years.

My father was a Scotchman, and of a very good family, but no fortune. He had been educated for a physician, but being of a volatile temper, after having pursued his studies with success, his inclinations

nations changed, and he entered as midshipman, on board a Man of War, then lying in Leith harbour. His family enraged at this step disclaimed all further intercourse with him, and he found himself obliged to pursue his new profession with ardour and attention. His efforts succeeded so well, that in fourteen years he was appointed to the command of a ship, in which during the war, he conducted himself so fortunately, that he found himself at the conclusion of it, a post captain, with a very competent fortune. That national attachment, which so strongly marks the Scotch, drew my father to revisit his native land, but being obliged to delay some weeks in the north of England, to transact some business, he saw my mother, liked and married her, she was the only daughter of a small beneficed clergyman, in that neighbourhood. My grandfather told him, in giving him his child, he gave him his all, and consigned to his care the precious deposit of all his earthly happiness.

My

My mother was handsome, timid, and unfeeling, who readily adopted the opinions of others, or had not sufficient resolution to adhere to her own, her character was admirably suited to that of my father, and promised a lasting felicity. I was one of the fruits of this union, and from my cradle, consigned to my grandfather's care. He early instilled into my heart, principles of rectitude, morality, and a sense of religion, which now soothes the evening of my life, and heals those wounds with which misfortune has lacerated my heart. My grandfather devoted his whole time to the formation of my mind, and to meliorate a too great warmth of temper and affections, which, with extreme concern, he perceived in my character. He instructed me in English, French, and Latin, taught me Geography, Chronology, in short, he educated me with that sort of knowledge, which he himself possessed. I managed his little family as I grew older, but was as ignorant of the world and its wiles, as  
if



if I had never existed. My grandfather's income was very small, consequently he kept up no neighbourhood, with people capable of enlarging my ideas. I was his companion, his pupil, and his comfort. My mother had followed my father abroad on the American station, my brother and sister accompanied her. I saw them for a few days on their road from Scotland, but was else an utter stranger to them. My days flowed on in peaceful tranquillity, until my sixteenth year, when I lost my respectable parent, by a few hours illness, unversed in, and unprepared for affliction. I was almost frantic, at his being seized, I knelt at his bedside, wearying heaven with fruitless prayers for his recovery. My child, said he, (pressing my hand between his) assuage your grief, although it is natural to feel, it is impious to repine, at the will of the Almighty. We must, thou dearest object of my tenderest care, we must separate, the fatal moment is arrived, and we should submit like Christians, to the all-wise

wise decree, and part with resignation. I am going to exchange this troublesome world, for a better, and the only sting death has for me, is quitting thee. Receive, oh dearest, with my dying blessing, this last injunction from him, whose latest wish, is for your happiness here and hereafter. Let your fate be ever so adverse or irksome, always act with that rectitude of principle, which will never add self-reproach to the bitterness of reflection. The scenes you will meet with at your father's, will be very different from those, in which you have hitherto lived, but let not the spotless purity of your mind, be tainted by the example of the world, conduct yourself uprightly, to the best of your judgment. Conscious integrity can never err, and remember my last blessing shall hover over such a tenor of conduct: he added much more, which my grief prevented me from recollecting, and expired in my arms a few hours after.

I will

I will pass over the melancholy scenes which followed, until my arrival at my father's near Aberdeen. I was then sixteen, and though you will now smile at the idea, was really handsome. My youth, my extreme grief gave me an interesting appearance. My father and mother received me with kindness, my brother and sister with affection, but they felt my loss like people unacquainted with the extent of it, and their composure, added to the anguish of my mind, which for want of a friend to share its woes with sympathy, preyed upon my spirits. The only comfort I had, was from the artless grief of an old maid-servant, who accompanied me from Cumberland, and regretted its wilds, as sincerely as I did. My simplicity amused my family, my sister had been educated at a boarding-school, and had much of the flippantry attendant on that mode of education. My brother was young, and just returned from his first voyage—my mother passive and mild, —my father imperious, and very impatient



ent of the smallest contradiction. Such was the family into which I came, innocent, ignorant, and too diffident to ask any of their opinions. My continued sorrow soon became tiresome to them, reproof followed reproof, to no purpose. I was dragged into public, the novelty of the scene, and my natural cheerfulness of temper, dissipated my chagrins, and I became tolerably easy, when Aberdeen races came on. I had learned some accomplishments, and among the rest dancing. My sister was elder than me, and really a very pretty woman, and had been much admired, but the novelty of my appearance, and the rusticity of my manners, drew a crowd of flatterers round me, amongst the rest, Lord W. H——, singled me out by the most distinguished attention, he became my partner at all the balls, and was too attractive to pass unnoticed.—Joined to a very elegant figure and appearance, he possessed a thorough knowledge of the world, and of our sex in particular, and could assume whatever

demeanour

demeanour he thought most likely to succeed. To me he was soft, and respectful, and breathed nothing but sentiments of the nicest honor,—I was too artless to perceive the snare that was laid for me, and returned home after the race week, in a state of mind very different from what I had left it. My sister imbibed by the decrease of attention she had found, which she had attributed to me, and which she never forgave me, treated me with haughty reserve. My mother, whose character was cold, and inanimate, gave me no encouragement to fly to her, for advice or protection, and my young heart unsupported and unadvised, became an easy prey to the passion which began to seduce it. Lord W. was the most pleasing man I had ever seen, he became the sole object of my thoughts, and without foreseeing the danger of my error, or indeed, being conscious that it was one, I gave myself up to the pleasure of contemplating every thing he had said to me, as the highest gratification I could indulge

indulge myself in. Lord W. had frequent opportunities of meeting me, and every one served to encrease a passion, which soon became unchangeable. I will not tire your patience with the detail, suffice it to say, that an explanation took place, and I was persuaded, that I was as much beloved as I loved. Lord W. urged me to keep this affair a secret, as he said his father was upon the point of making a settlement upon him, which might be stopped, if he discovered his engagement, that he could not bear the thought of marrying me to starve, but the moment he could make me independent, he would avow it to the whole world, and be united to me for ever. He pressed me to be particularly careful, that my sister should not know it, whose jealousy would, he assured me, infallibly divulge it. Alas, her conduct too clearly supported his reasoning, and I was weak enough to comply. Things remained in this state for some time, until a Mr. Cameron, a relation of my father's came to our house,

he



he had made a large fortune as a commissary of the army abroad, and was now come to finish his days in his native country. He was elderly, illiterate, and forbidding, vulgar in his manners, stern and over-bearing in conversation. It was my misfortune to attract his notice, and he made the most lucrative proposals for me to my father, who, without consulting my inclinations, prepared every thing for the match, and ordered me to receive Mr. Cameron as my husband. In vain I wept, knelt, and implored, my father was inexorable. Driven to extremities, I pleaded my attachment to another, my father sternly demanded the object, the promise I had made my lover, crossed my thoughts for a moment, I shuddered at such a breach of faith as declaring it, my tongue refused its office, and I could not pronounce one word. My father incensed at my silence, overwhelmed me with abuse, and ordered me to prepare for my marriage the following evening. My lover was absent, he knew not my persecution, and

and I did not know how to impart it to him. My mother wept and prayed for me, but would not listen to my complaints, my sister insulted me with congratulations, and my fate seemed inevitable. The next morning, the servant I have already mentioned, stole into my room, and gave me a note from Lord W. which contained these words, "fly without delay to the lesser garden gate, if you do not comply, I swear to put an end to an existence, grown odious to me, from the fear of losing you," this note agitated and delighted me, I flew without hesitation to the spot. Lord W. played off all the artillery, vows and threats, to prevail on me to go off with him, he urged every misery attendant on my marrying Cameron, and painted his own wretchedness in the most lively colours. I wavered, but the dying injunctions of my dear grandfather, stuck upon my memory, and in a fit of terror, I disengaged myself from him, and flew towards the house. Lord W. followed me with vain entreaties,

entreaties, until reaching a little wood,  
 through which I was to pass, I heard my  
 father's and Cameron's voices very loud,  
 pronouncing my name. Sensations of hor-  
 ror seized me, and I fell senseless on the  
 ground, and on recovering, found myself  
 in a chaise and four, with Lord W. go-  
 ing full speed. My agony and astonish-  
 ment knew no bounds, the impropriety  
 of my situation, struck me in the most  
 forcible light; I wept, I implored, to be  
 restored to my family, and assured Lord  
 W. I preferred every misfortune, to re-  
 maining with him. My lover was too  
 well versed in the motions of the heart,  
 to oppose its first effusions. He submitted  
 to my invectives, with the most respect-  
 ful patience, argued the necessity of our  
 immediate flight and marriage, the vio-  
 lence of my father's resentment, had he  
 found me, and the impossibility of his  
 living, and seeing me united to another.  
 The little kindness I had ever at home,  
 my attachment to Lord W. and the power  
 a beloved object has over us in argument,  
 joined



joined to calm my emotions, and I pursued my journey, delighted at the prospect of being united to the man I loved, and at having escaped Cameron. We reached an old retired castle in the third evening, he told me, it belonged to a friend of his, on whom he could depend, who was then absent, and had lent it to him. Three days glided on, in which Lord W. tried every art to amuse and please me, but a secret uneasiness preyed on my mind, which I could neither conquer or conceal. I felt my situation, and the consideration of having, in some degree, merited them, encreased my sufferings. I told Lord W. I could no longer submit to the torture of my own reflections, which, like an incessant monitor, reminded me of my duty, and that nothing could quiet those sensations, but having my honor secured, by the performance of his vows. Lord W. appeared in raptures at my condescension, as he called it, and pleaded his unwillingness to leave me, even for a moment, as  
the

the cause of his delay, and assured me he would set off, in search of a licence and clergyman. That night, my spirits calmed by these protestations, felt the highest elasticity of youthful hope, and relieved from the oppression of past misery, gave way to the delusive joy of picturing future scenes, bright as my hopes, and unfulfilled as my intentions ; but alas, clouds of the blackest despair, quickly obscured this chimerical sunshine of felicity, and plunged me into an abyss of misery. Lord W. left me with appearances of the fondest love, and promised to return in two days ; the pangs which I felt at losing sight of him, have since appeared to me as the sad presage of what followed. Left to myself, a gloom pervaded my mind, I recollected Mr. Stanley's dying injunctions, I lamented my breach of duty, and was conscious, he would have blamed my conduct, in carrying on a clandestine correspondence. I shuddered, my ideas grew confused, remorse, hope, fear and duty, tore my breast with contend-

ing

ing passions. I trembled and was terrified, at the step I was going to take, uncertain and miserable, I projected a thousand schemes, and dismissed them as often. At night, I dreamt my grandfather came to me, and upbraided me severely, for swerving from his precepts, and threatened me with punishment. I awaked with terror, and sprung from my bed, more dead than alive. The silence of the castle, increased the horrors of my imagination, and I waited impatiently for day, it came at last, and I hurried into the garden to recover my spirits, and refresh myself by the air. I wandered some time, till I reached a grove, near the wall of the castle, there I was alarmed by some noise, and from an intuitive apprehension, I retreated behind some bushes, to avoid being seen—Guess my astonishment, to see Lord W. enter at a small gate, accompanied by a man I had never seen. I was near enough to hear their conversation, “ she is a  
 “ beautiful creature, my dear Archbrook,  
 “ said my lover, but our situations in life,

F

are



“ are too different, to think of marrying  
 “ her, and she is too virtuous to comply  
 “ on any other terms. You will look  
 “ very venerable in a gown and cassock,  
 “ and by filling up the blank licence with  
 “ my name, and that of Olivia Doug-  
 “ lass, she will never suspect any deceit.  
 “ Command me as you please, my dear  
 “ Lord, replied Ashbrook, but seriously  
 “ don’t you feel some remorse, at prose-  
 “ cuting such a plan. If the girl be such  
 “ as you represent her to be, will she not  
 “ instantly leave you, when she discovers  
 “ the snare. As to that, replied Lord W.  
 “ she may do as she pleases. I now love  
 “ her to distraction, and cannot live  
 “ without her; my love may not last,  
 “ and if it should, I am certain of my  
 “ power over her heart.”

I heard no more, a turn of the walk  
 led them from me. Horror, amazement,  
 terror, nailed me to the ground. I shud-  
 dered at the precipice I was at the brink  
 of falling into: my next idea was how to  
 fly

fly my seducer. I crept to the little gate, and opening it, ran with incredible swiftness across the moor. Fear gave wings to my speed, and I reached a neighbouring forest without interruption, I penetrated into the deepest shade, and careless of every thing but escaping, continued my flight, till at last exhausted with terror and fatigue, I sunk under a tree; I remained here in almost a state of insensibility for some hours. My grief nearly deprived me of reason, and I cast my eyes no further than the present moment; at last night came on, and hunger with it, and I became more sensible of my situation. I endeavoured to explore my way, and wandered all night, to extricate myself from the forest, but in vain; hopeless and feeble, I sunk down at last, as I then thought, and wished never more to rise, but my sufferings were to be prolonged, and I was discovered by a herd, who was watching cattle. This man had some humanity, he took me to his hut in the forest, where his wife took

care of me, strewed some rushes in a corner for me, and in spite of my sorrows, nature overpowered, sunk under the load, and I slept several hours. But, my dear Laura, what were my sensations on awaking? The loss of my lover, reputation, and every hope of future happiness in the world was cut off from, and an everlasting barrier raised between me and felicity: I abhorred the man capable of betraying a heart which he knew he wholly possessed, and from whose blind attachment alone, could he reap the defence his conduct required. I had now no home, my present situation was liable to discovery every moment. Horrible as it appeared to me, to see my family, yet it was the only step left me to take. Naturally sanguine, the idea of returning to my duty cheered me, and the hope of expiating my fault by my future conduct, allowed me to flatter myself, that my pardon might be acquired; they got me pen and paper from the next town, I wrote, and the herd took charge of my letter.



letter. Let me pass over in silence the dreadful period of his absence, he returned, and brought my sentence with him, my friends would only receive me, on condition I accepted Cameron, I had no power to reject, my miseries had so stunned me, that I felt nothing. I did as they bid me, I was proof against every thing until my fate was decided, and Cameron saluted me as his wife ; then those passions, of which the variety of my sorrows had stemmed the passage, rushed like an impetuous tide upon my heart. They quite over-powered me, I uttered a faint shriek, and fell senseless on the floor. I was taken up delirious, and put to bed ; during seven weeks, I struggled between life and death with a most violent fever. My youth however dragged me through it, and my recovery was no longer doubtful. My father's heart softened, and he knelt by my bedside with anxious care. I felt the self-reproach which dictated his concern, and pitied him for it : I had much time for reflection during my confinement, the  
weak

weak state to which I was reduced, gave me leisure to weigh things calmly, without my feelings being able to voyage my heart as they had hitherto done ; I considered my grandfather's instructions, and owned I had deviated from them. I felt my woes were the consequence of my breach of duty in listening to Lord William, but my punishment I presumptuously thought exceeded my fault. I wept, and implored heaven to pity and strengthen me. I called to mind the vows I had made to Cameron in the sight of it, and trembled at the idea of breaking them, I strove to reconcile myself to him. I durst not examine my heart with regard to Lord William, my pride, my reason, my virtue, bid me abhor him, but I feared his image was too deeply engraved on my heart, to be able to expel him from it ; I repeated to myself the obligation I owed my husband for marrying me, when my fame (however unjustly) was sullied, and I bade my virtue ever remember, that it was his acceptance

ance of me, which cleared it from the aspersions my conduct had thrown upon it ; amidst all my miseries an enthusiastic love of virtue reigned over my passions, and from that reason gave this argument weight with me ; I concluded with resolving never to look back, to wipe the past from my remembrance, and endeavour with much submission, to perform my duty for the future, in that state Providence had allotted for me, and I determined never to enquire after, or let Lord William's name pass my lips ; I grew more tranquil after forming this resolution, and astonished my family by a composure they neither expected or hoped for : My father, though violent, had penetration, was not deceived, and I often caught him considering me with a melancholy attention : Mr. Cameron's temper soon unfolded itself, and I became the sad victim of passion, cruelty, and caprice, but as I had hoped for nothing better, I was not disappointed ; he soon grew tired of my father, and carried  
me



me to an old Castle he had in the Highlands ; my father objected warmly, as my health was in a very delicate state, but to no purpose, all opposition was vain, and my father, as he was putting me into the chaise, pressed my hand, and said softly, “ Dear child, forgive me if I “ have erred, I did it for the best,” We drove off, and I had no time to reply, if he loves me, cried I, What must he feel at having sacrificed his child ? I will not add to them by complaints—he never shall know what I endure. I soon found Mr. Cameron had married me only from a desire of vengeance, too implacable to forgive my elopement, he had only taken me to punish me, by separating me for ever from my lover ; his ill-treatment encreased to blows, and the course of ebriety in which he lived, gave no respite to my persecutions, yet still I persevered with a religious strictness in resolution, and never breathed a murmur. I became a mother about a year after, and all those ardent affections,

which

which had been so long laid waste, now centered in my child, I loved her with that excess of fondness, which a maternal breast is alone capable of feeling, her image drove a more fatal one from my heart, the neglect which her father shewed her, endeared her to me, and in some moments of sanguine hope, I looked forward to her future friendship as the solace of my life, and the retribution of all I had suffered; alas! how vain are the views of human happiness! could I then conceive that from her, I was to receive the deepest wound my unfortunate breast ever experienced, she was about a year old, when the crisis of my fate approached, I had since my marriage called myself to the strictest account, and never could accuse myself of having acted inconsistently with my first resolution; one fatal day, my evil genius led me to walk in a shrubbery near the Castle, when I perceived a labourer advancing towards me, judge of my surprise, when I beheld Lord William at my feet, I drew

back with horror, and attempted to leave him, but he caught hold of my gown, stay, cried he, hear me but a moment, and I will leave you for ever, if you do not, by all that is sacred, I will follow you to the Castle: What can you want, said I? your power of fascination is over, I can no longer be deceived, I am the wife of Mr. Cameron, and it is criminal to listen to you, and I will sacrifice every appearance, rather than remain longer in conversation with you: Lord William frantic with passion, caught hold of my hand, and swore the most violent love had prompted him to see me once more, and take a last farewell of me, and that he should leave Scotland next day for ever, say you forgive me, said he, and I will leave you; I do, said I, go, and never disturb a wretch more: He pressed my hand to his lips, and at the same instant, a rustling among the trees, raised my eyes to it, but what became of me at the sight! My husband discharged his fowling-piece in my lover's breast, and left



eft him expiring at my feet ; instantly  
 all my love returned, I rent the air with  
 my cries, I fell upon the ground befide  
 him, and tore my cloaths to ftop his  
 blood ; I loaded Cameron, who flood  
 fmiling by, with every opprobrious epi-  
 thet I could think of ; Lord William  
 looked up at me, a gleam of pleasure  
 croffed his face, he preffed my hand and  
 expired : My defpair knew no bounds,  
 and authenticated the barbarous false-  
 hoods of my husband, I loved with all  
 the ardor of a youthful paffion, and a  
 heart unversed in deceit, Lord William,  
 (excepting my grandfather,) was the on-  
 ly perfon who had ever expreffed any  
 attachment to me, whatever his faults  
 had been, he payed dearly for them, and  
 to fee the man I had loved, fo perfectly  
 murdered for my fake, wafhed away all  
 his imperfections with his blood, and left  
 him the fame perfect creature, in whom I  
 had centered every expectation, or idea  
 of happinefs. I will not deceive you my  
 young friend, blameable as it may feem to  
 you,

you, a sentiment often arose in my mind, although I strove to banish it, that I might in some future day be disengaged, and revive my partiality without a crime; but in the scene before me, every delusion vanished, and my love and my despair only remained; I bedewed the corpse of Lord William with tears, and could only be torn from it by force; my husband, surrounded by his creatures declared, he had committed that rash act in his own defence, having met me going off with my paramour, with whom I had long carried on a private correspondence; Lord William's disguise corroborated the detail, his death prevented all contradiction from him, and what could my protestations avail? Cameron dreaded Lord William's relations, and could only vindicate himself by such a tale, my former elopement made the story too probable, and the crime of which he was accused, is held in such detestation in Scotland, that Cameron obtained his pardon. As to me, distracted by my grief, and  
frantic

frantic with sorrow, I disregarded every thing, until my child was taken from me, then the mother silenced every other sensation, and I almost lost my reason. Six days after this fatal event, my tyrant conducted me into a grated tower, which was to constitute from that day my prison for life ; here said he, (taking out a letter,) is contemplation for your leisure hours ; I was too much afflicted to attend to him, my grief had given way to stupidity, which lasted for the three or four first days of my confinement, and was only interrupted by opening and shutting my door once a day to put in provisions ; I took up the letter at last, it was from my father. Judge what an addition to my sufferings, when I read as follows :—

“ I perfectly approve of your mode of  
 “ punishment, for the abandoned wretch,  
 “ whom I can no longer look upon as a  
 “ daughter, secure her from relapsing  
 “ into that vice, with which she has  
 “ stained



“ stained both our families, let solitude  
 “ and meditation be her lot, I will re-  
 “ ceive her child, and educate it in a just  
 “ abhorrence of her mother, and her  
 “ crimes.”

The accumulation this letter was  
 to my miseries, exceeds belief, the  
 idea of my child being taught to be-  
 lieve me criminal, was the bitterest pang  
 I had yet endured, I had no means  
 of making a defence for myself with my  
 father, would he, prepossessed against  
 me as he was, believe any thing I could  
 urge in my own favour, unsupported by  
 any testimony but my word ; I will not  
 dwell upon the miserable existence I  
 dragged on for three years, at length,  
 time and religion, effected a resignation  
 I had thought impossible, and I began to  
 consider my trials as the means of leading  
 my soul to God, they had weaned me  
 from all worldly wishes, but my child,  
 and the hope of a future indulgence in  
 her society, if I out-lived my husband,  
 softened the rigor of many moments ;  
 I formed

I formed plans, in which the enjoyment of her company was the principal object, and my only expectation of happiness, which lasted for years ; my affections revolted at the easy credence my family had given to Cameron's infamous story, made me very indifferent about them, I preferred my prison infinitely to the torture of beholding him, whom I looked upon as the author of every calamity that had befallen me : Eleven years I dragged on this deplorable life, when I was released by his death, which a fall from his horse occasioned, but his vengeance pursued me even beyond the grave ; he made a will, in which after summing up the circumstances of my supposed dishonour, he left his daughter sole heiress, with strict injunctions to her guardians, never to suffer her to see me, under severe penalties. In vain I wrote to my father details of my sufferings, and vindications of my conduct, my letters were rejected, and my visit forbid. Humbled and offended, I retired into a remote

remote part of Scotland, to await my daughter's coming of age; that period at length arrived, I had heard of her being married some time before, I wrote to her, and implored me to let me see her, Alas! the prejudices of education were too powerful, and I received a cold refusal; this last and only point denied me, I had literally no cause to live for, and I determined to quit the country in which I had endured so much, and waste the remainder of my days in perfect obscurity. In England, I might be discovered; I therefore preferred Ireland, and after having settled a correspondence for the payment of my jointure to a banker in Dublin,) the punctual payment of which, was the only justice I ever received from my family) I left Scotland, came over here, and fixed on this retired spot for my future residence; I changed my name to Warley, and have remained here sixteen years, in anxious expectation of being released. Cruelly as my daughter has treated me, I cannot shake her



her from my heart, but she is the only remaining object interesting to it. Compare, my dear Mrs. Mortimer, your fate with mine, and shudder at woes you have escaped from.

Thus did the dear venerable sufferer, conclude her calamitous history. She had endured so much more than I had, I was ashamed to recollect my own want of fortitude; with what heroic patience she supported herself, under trials so severe and unmerited as her's were, without a friend, to keep her from sinking under such an accumulation of afflictions.—

Adieu, my kind protectress, continue to love your sincerely attached

LAURA MORTIMER.

LETTER

## LETTER XII.

MY EVER DEAR HONORA,

I AM so flattered and so delighted, that I hardly know what I am writing. You will scarcely believe me, when I tell you, that Laura's brother is at this moment enjoying the sweets of repose beneath this roof. As I was sitting this morning in a deep reverie of the melancholy kind, while my mother was paying her accustomed visit to my brother, I was roused from it by a message from a servant, who earnestly desired to speak to any of the ladies of the family, I desired to see him, he entered the room with a respectful bow. He was advanced in life, but appeared genteel and intelligent, he said he hoped I would pardon his boldness in coming to enquire after a young lady, who, he had been informed, took refuge in this house, and who had been forcibly carried off from her friends in America. That her youngest brother was now in  
Dublin,

Dublin, searching after her, and that some others of her relations, were dispersed over England, Scotland and France, in pursuit of her, and the villain who had torn her from her family. I told him she was safe and well, and as happy as the loss of so excellent a man as Mr. Mortimer, would permit her to be, but that as to informing him where she was, I must be excused, as that secret was not mine to divulge. Madam said he, I perceive the being honored with my master's confidence cannot entitle me to your's, but I am persuaded, you will not refuse to see Mr. Henry Valmont, that he may learn from your lips, the situation of a sister, he with the greatest justice adores. I answered that my mother and I should spend the evening at home, and should be glad to see the brother of my friend, I asked him a great many questions, all of which he evaded answering, and bowing most respectfully left me. When my mother returned, I told her what had passed, how very fortunate said she, is your brother's illness,



illness, as it prevents a meeting between those two young men, which must have been fatal to one of them. He is still delirious and in great danger, if I lose him of a fever, I shall always consider his death, as the will of the Supreme Being, and resignation to omnipotence, will soften my affliction—but should the sword of an adversary pierce his bosom, the wound would pass through my heart, with the double anguish of knowing his own vices, were his assassins. All my philosophy could not support me under such accumulated misfortunes—The clock had hardly struck six, when Mr. Valmont was announced. I never beheld so interesting a figure—tall, majestic, graceful, elegant; every feature like Laura's with more animation, a voice which speaks to the soul, and a manner at once unembarrassed and respectful. He politely apologized for a visit, which he hoped, we would not consider as an intrusion, as he found we were acquainted with Laura, and would only make allowance, for the interest a brother

ther took in her affairs. He entreated, nay urged us to inform him where she was, my mother complied, but requested he would defer his visit to her, until she was properly informed of his arrival in Ireland, as her spirits have already sustained so many severe shocks, seeing him abruptly, might have a bad effect on her weak nerves. He has consented to stay until we hear from you, and is now established here, with his servant Le Fevre, who is the man that came here to enquire for Laura. My mother admires Valmont excessively—Oh Honora, how my heart bleeds, at the idea of his hearing that the Mr. James, he has so much reason to execrate, is the brother of your

LOUISA LUTON.

LETTER

## LETTER XIII.

COUNTESS OF EMERTON TO MISS LUTON.

I RECEIVED my dear *Louisa's* packet yesterday evening, and retired to my own room to read it. I had hardly began it, when I felt myself wonderfully interested, but heavens, what became of me, when I discovered, pictured under the appearance of the most undutiful hardness of heart, your friend Honora, the more I read, the more I was agitated, my heart was torn with remorse, for having added to the undeserved affliction of my innocent parent. and I had hardly finished it, when I fell senseless on the floor, how long I remained in that situation, I know not, on recovering, I found myself in bed, surrounded by my friends, who, with anxious looks, were making enquiries after my health. Do not ask after me, said I, such a wretch as I am, does



does not merit the least attention. My Lord looked amazed, take that manuscript and read it, and learn to be ashamed, of ever having loved so undutiful and cruel a daughter, as I have been, to a suffering and amiable mother, he took it, and retired to read it. Dear Louisa, I was not intentionally inhuman, I was deceived treacherously, deceived by my severe grandfather, and still more savage, barbarous aunt. They taught me to think, my angelic, my blameless mother, was the most artful and abandoned of her sex. How sharply do I now reproach myself, for my implicit credulity, and never having taken any steps to see my dear, though unfortunate parent, since my marriage, too ready to believe their misrepresentations, and too young and ignorant of the world, to reason upon their motives. I took for truths, their malicious deceptions, and yielded an easy credence to them; how little do I deserve the affectionate dutiful attention, my two sons pay me, I who have inconsiderately  
 wrung

wrung my mother's heart ; I can no longer wonder, that I have never been blessed with a daughter. My Lord is gone to Warley Cottage, to prepare the dear possessor, for receiving me in character, of her repentant child. I am wild with impatience, to see her, to hear her mild revered voice, pronounce my pardon. I die, to assure her of my ardent affection for her, and claim her company as my right, for the remainder of our days. She is coming, Louisa, she is coming with my Lord, she is coming to forgive and bless me. How forcibly does the voice of nature speak, to describe my feelings would be impossible, while she clasped me in her arms, and invoked Heaven, to shower down blessings on my head. Tears of maternal tenderness forced their passage through her eye-lids, but they were the soft effusions of joy. A sweet serenity took place, of our first agitation, we viewed each other with silent and mutual delight, Nothing, however, could prevail on her, to leave Laura alone

—“ my

—"my adopted daughter," said she, must not be neglected, but as soon as she is restored to her friends, I will return, and remain with you, while this tottering fabric lasts. She arose, and embracing me affectionately, said, "you have inspired me with a wish to live." She then returned to Warley Cottage, my Lord conducted her there. He seems almost as much delighted with our discovery of each other, as your

HONORA EMERTON.

G L E T T E R



## LETTER XIV.

COUNTRESS OF EMERTON TO MISS LUTON.

PREPARE, my dear Louisa, for a most enchanting surprize. Mortimer lives, and is, most probably, on his way to Ireland. I most sincerely congratulate you on his resurrection; your happiness is more concerned in it, than you are aware of. Your lover, (for such if I have any penetration he is), arrived here yesterday, and charmed us with his address, manner, elegance, &c. From your letter, my angel mother had prepared Laura to expect a visit from her brother. I went with him to the cottage. Laura received him with great affection, but wept bitterly; after some time, she asked after all her friends but Mortimer, and enquired what had been said of her elopement. He answered, that it was universally known, that Mr. James had carried her

her

her off by stratagem, contrary to her inclinations. He added, that on his return home with his mother, he found his father enquiring after Mr. James, with furious eagerness, who was not any where to be found. Miss Valmont, who told him the whole affair, and having the honor of his family at heart, he followed Mr. James to the camp, fearing he might take some fatal step, from violent impetuosity of his temper, but arrived too late, as Mortimer had received a wound in his breast, and was apparently dead. Apparently! echoed Laura, with a wild look: Brother, did you not say apparently? Mr. Valmont, who did not design to have said so much, blushed excessively, Laura threw herself at his feet, seized both his hands, and said, with a voice and look of awful solemnity, if you ever loved your wretched sister, tell me, oh tell me, the true sense of that word apparently, do not fear to confess it, I am prepared for every event. He raised her gently in his arms. My Laura, you could not bear to

hear that your Mortimer lives. I could, I could, exclaimed she in a frantic voice, and would adore the tongue, that assured me of it, that blessed me with the glad tidings. I conjure you, in the name of Heaven! tell me if you do not wish to see me expire at your feet; relieve me from this torturing suspense. Then, said he, with a voice and look the most touching that can be imagined; he lives, Mortimer lives! and lives for love and Laura. She heard no more, but fainted away.—The amiable Henry's distress, was dreadful until she recovered, which she very soon did; and then intreated him, to favour us with an event, we were all so anxious to hear. He then told us, that he had run for surgeons for Mr. Mortimer, who, from the first dressing, was pronounced not to be mortally wounded: that Laura was not missed for some time, but at last she was, and sought for every where. By persevering in enquiring, we discovered, that Mr. James had hired a packet boat to carry him to Europe, in  
case



case Mortimer fell. Into this boat, his friends carried the distracted Laura. As soon as this was discovered, several boats were dispatched in pursuit of her; but none of them could gain sight of her.—That her brother had pursued her to Wales, her father to France; that he had wrote to them the joyful news of her safety. They having previously agreed to what towns their letters should be directed, and he had no doubt, that they would all assemble in Ireland, in a very little time. Laura told him, she had wrote many letters to America, and she supposed Mortimer would be tranquillized by reading those on her fate.—I thought Laura beautiful before, but I am now convinced, that nothing can embellish beauty, like real heartfelt-joy.—May thy joys be permanent, divine Laura; and may you never know another cruel reverse of fortune!

Adieu, my dearest friend, may you be as truly happy as is at present your

HONORA EMERTON.

## LETTER XV.

MISS LUTON TO THE COUNTESS OF  
EMERTON.

NEVER was a cordial more necessary, or more happily administered, than that which your letter conveyed to me; it diffused the sweetest hope, and banished the deep dejection which had taken possession of my mind. I repeat to myself, Mortimer lives; and my unfortunate brother has escaped the misery of being an homicide. Though I cannot pretend to defend his conduct, yet still he is dear, very dear to my heart. My mother is absolutely wretched about him; his ravings are so wild and violent, it is with great difficulty he can be kept in bed; he is fallen into a sound sleep, which may, perhaps, relieve him.

Miss

MISS LUTON, *in Continuation.*

MY brother is much better, and quite calm and reasonable, but extremely weak; he told my mother, that he felt the approach of death, with dreadful apprehensions, that he now viewed his conduct in the blackest colours; that his remorse was severe and poignant, and his repentance perfectly sincere; that it would be a great alleviation to the despair he felt, if he could see Laura, and hear her pronounce his pardon, before he met his poor murdered friend in a better world. My mother thought him still raving, as he had often, in the absence of his reason, called Mortimer his injured, his murdered friend; and sometimes he believed Laura dead of grief, and imagined her ghost haunted and tortured him. All this arose from remorse, which from the disordered state of his reason, had no arrangement; but now that he has recovered his understanding, it takes a juster form,



form, and looks forward to chastisement, for the crime he believes he has committed. Last night he entreated me to pray for him; Louisa, said he, you are an innocent creature, and your prayers will be admitted to the throne of grace; but I am so black with crimes, that if I should pray, my supplications would be returned in dire curses on my own head. I could only answer by my tears; my mother soothed him with religious discourses. Alas, mother, said he, to a true Christian such as you are, the grave has but few terrors; but for me, I who have badly known a God, and cannot feel the healing balm of his mercy, Death is, indeed, a king of terrors to me! how I longed to tell him all I knew, and ease at once, the wretchedness of his mind; but that I did not dare to do, for fear of involving us in fresh calamities. The physician that attends him, thinks his constitution has received a fatal blow, and has not the least hope of his recovery, at least in this climate; therefore, if he can be moved,

he

he is to be carried to Spa. Could Laura and her Mortimer see his pale face, and emaciated figure, their well-founded resentment, would give place to compassion. Hearts formed like theirs, never can harbour implacable hatred.

MISS LUTON *in Continuation.*

CAN you believe, my Honora, that Mr. Mortimer has been here some hours; and is, in every respect, the most accomplished gentleman I ever met with. No wonder Laura's young heart fell an easy sacrifice to so many charms? my mother admires him more than Mr. Valmont, to own the truth; though Mortimer is a charming man, I was hurt at the preference she gave him; I was unable to dispute it, I wished to defend my favourite, and would have blessed any one, that would have done it for me. But a sort of consciousness locked up my tongue. A confusion, and a I dont know what, made me so bad an advocate, that I was

near betraying myself, in attempting to vindicate his claims. Mr. Mortimer told us, that Laura's father was gone to France in pursuit of Mr. James, whom he followed with the bitterest rancour;—he added, that he hoped they might not meet, as an engagement between them, must prove fatal to one of the parties.—I trembled, my mother asked him what he had determined with regard to Mr. James. He answered, that he hoped by this time, he had fully seen the baseness as well as the absurdity of his conduct; and would avoid an enraged and injured husband, whose honor and person he had so unjustly attacked; that his character demanded Mr. James's life! but as he did not wish to embrue his hands in the blood of his fellow-creature, he would not seek him. He owned he had loved him like a brother; and that he possessed many good qualities, until by giving the reins to his passions, they led him astray, and obscured all his merit. My mother then said to him, if you saw Mr. James on a  
sick



sick bed, dying of an incurable complaint, occasioned by the most pungent remorse, for the wrongs he has done you; could you behold him on the verge of the grave; would your resentment pursue him farther? He paused, and replied; that a person who came under the description she had given, would not be an object for any man's sword. That it was the fierce, insolent, audacious James, who had dared to violate every law, and trample on every restraint; that he wished to punish, not such a shadow as she represented; nor the man he had once called his friend.— If, said my mother, you could bear the shock; I could inform you where to find the meager shade I have described to you, and who has, at this early period of his life, fallen a sacrifice to the strong sense he entertains of the injuries he has done you. Where, madam, where? cried Mortimer eagerly, for I once loved him so well, and with such true affection, I cannot hear of his misery with indifference. Be more patient, sir, replied my mother; behold

behold in the women present, the mother  
 and sister of that rash and unfortunate  
 young man. His father, whose name  
 was Luton, was a lawyer of some emi-  
 nence: He had but a small estate, and a  
 very delicate constitution, which prevent-  
 ed him from applying to his profession for  
 the two last years of his life; and he often  
 lamented the narrow circumstances his  
 death would leave us in. A brother of  
 his mother's, having learned his situation,  
 wrote to him, that he would take his son,  
 and adopt and educate him as his own; and  
 at his death, leave him his whole estate, on  
 condition of taking his family name of  
 James. All this was immediately execut-  
 ed: Mr. Luton dying when his son was  
 only two years old, was happy at his be-  
 ing so amply provided for; but the event  
 proved how short-sighted we poor mor-  
 tals are! After his father's death, my  
 son often visited my daughter and me,  
 and always shewed us the politest atten-  
 tion; but strangers had formed his mind,  
 and he did not love me sufficiently to give  
 my

my opinions weight with him. If I represented the injustice of any of the principles he professed; he smiled at my arguments, and treated my advice as that of a weak but well meaning person, whose goodness of heart atoned for her inferiority of understanding. Without once deigning to consult me, he went into the army, a school little calculated to rectify bad principles, or inculcate good ones; unless in minds where virtue is the genuine produce of the soil; and this was so far from being the present case, that nothing less than a severe misfortune, could effect a salutary change. He took leave of me, with an indifference that wrung my heart; and from the time he left Ireland, until that morning, he found Laura with me, he appeared to have forgot he had a mother or a sister, who were interested about him; I heard from others, that he was well and admired; these letters were painful proofs, that strangers, or at the utmost only acquaintance, felt more for me than my own son did. I concealed the grief  
his



his neglect gave me, for fear of communicating it to his sister ; whose dutiful affection would have doubled my chagrins by sharing them ; and therefore devoured my tears in secret, hardly ever permitting myself to pronounce his name. Judge, sir, what my feelings, what my present distress must be ; this son, this only representative of the best of husbands, and of men, now lies at the point of death ; conducted there by his own vices ! Totally ignorant of religion, he is destitute of hope ; languishing under severe bodily pains, and the still more excruciating ones of shame and remorse. Reproaching himself with treachery, ingratitude, and murder ; in such a situation, could you forgive the rash insult he offered to you ? Did you see him thus, could you forget your wrongs ? Do good for evil, and close the eyes of a man, whose arm was raised against your life ! She paused, tears glistened in Mortimer's fine eyes ; a variety of passions raised a conflict in his breast, at last he sighed, and said, if your picture

is

is drawn without exaggeration ; no heart could be so savage as to refuse him consolation. My mother rung for the coach, and in a few minutes, we were in my brother's apartment ; my mother and I sat near his bed, Mortimer was concealed behind the curtains, lest the surprise of seeing him, should cause a relapse. After some trifling chat, my mother asked if he was certain he had killed his friend ; as many people had received severe wounds, and yet recovered ; I am but too certain of it, answered my brother ; he expired in the arms of his Laura, and that depriving the lovely mourner of reason ; put her without opposition, into my power. There was a ship in the harbour, bound for some days to Cork, which was to sail the morning of this unhappy day ; money easily purchased a few hours delay ; and the crew only waited for me, and when I brought Laura on board, they instantly put to sea, and were very soon out of the reach of pursuit. I got a decent woman, who was one of the passengers,

sengers, to attend Laura; and flattered myself, her fit would be temporary; but when several days had elapsed, and she still continued insane; I felt the whole force of the crime I had committed, and my despair knew no bounds. The sharpest remorse gnawed my vitals, whenever her beautiful eyes were turned on me! I thought they reproached me with the destruction of all her happiness. She spoke but few words, and those incoherent, and made many attempts on her own life; every one of which, was a dagger to my tortured heart! I had her most carefully watched and attended, that she should not destroy herself; until she was forced from me by the taking of our ship, by a privateer; from that moment, I did not know what was become of her, until the morning I found her in your room; and to my inexpressible grief, discovered that she was restored to reason, only to execrate the barbarian, who had caused her so much misery. Oh! why was I permitted to be the instrument of ruin, to those



those whom I loved so well; but my love was that of a destroying fiend; and my affections carried a baleful influence to every one they fought. I had one true and tried friend; and him I have inhumanly murdered! and involved every one I love in misery. But are you convinced that there is no possibility of your friend's being alive? perhaps he only fainted from loss of blood, and may have recovered the blow you gave him! I see, dearest mother, you wish to flatter me into life; but believe me I never can recover: the hand of death has seized me, and I ought to die a sacrifice to the manes of the bravest, dearest, and best of friends? My sentence is not only just, but merciful:—Dearest brother, said I, there may be more of that name in America; but most assuredly, we have heard of one who escaped after having been wounded by his friend in a duel; of this we have certain intelligence. Take care, Louisa, you do attempt to deceive me; I never could forgive what you might deem a pious

pious fraud. There is no deceit intended, my son, answered my mother; Mortimer lives, and lives to pardon his James. My brother's agitation grew so violent, I feared he would have fallen into convulsions? Mother, cried he, in a tremulous voice; if you would wish to see your son die in peace, oh, repeat the blissful hallowed sound! Once more bless my dying ears; say, oh say again, he lives! he does, said Mortimer, discovering himself; he lives to embrace his repentant friend. My brother, overpowered with joy, was for some moments unable to speak; and the first words he was able to articulate were, oh! pardon, oh! forgive the assassin, who has so wantonly attacked your happiness. If I could see my friend taking care of his health, replied the generous Mortimer, my felicity might still be complete, and has only been delayed; the excellence of your constitution, may yet restore you to our wishes? my brother sighed, and shook his languid head.

Mortimer,

Mortimer, to prevent him from speaking, which he perceived, had greatly exhausted his strength; requested he would compose himself, while he related some news he had brought with him from America. You may remember a gay young French gentleman at Boston, called St. Clare, whose vivacity and poverty were proverbial amongst us. Nothing was so rigorous as his father's cruelty towards him, especially on the subject of money. This young man saw Mlle. Valmont at Boston, and became her captive; she became sensible of his attachment, and a mutual flame produced a mutual promise, of living for each other, in hopes that some favourable stroke of fortune, might one day enable them to unite their destinies. She refused many advantageous offers to the surprise of every one; and it was most generally believed, that pride alone had dictated her denials. For two years, their affections were only known to each other; neither of them having a

confidant,



confidant, their secret was therefore religiously kept, but since you left America, St. Clare received an account of the death of his father, who, to console him for having starved him during his life; had left him a very large estate, and a profusion of ready money. This estate joins the castle of Valmont: on the arrival of this news, the lovers owned their situation. The old Duchess happily approves of St. Clare for a son-in-law; and they have prevailed upon her to leave America, as the seat of war must still be a scene of desolation; and go with them to France. The Duke, will be charmed with the thoughts of returning to his own country, to which he is strongly attached, and I suppose, on the receipt of Henry's letters, which inform him of Laura's safety, he will immediately go back to America, and I shall write to him this night, to urge his return to Boston. After some more inconsequential conversation, we left my brother, if not better in health, at least much happier in mind. Mortimer sets

sets out to-morrow for Emerton Place;  
my mother has given him a multitude of  
cautions, not to appear before Laura ab-  
ruptly.

Adieu! my ever dear Honora, and be-  
lieve me ever your

**LOUISA LUTON.**

**LETTER**

COUNTESS OF EMERTON TO MISS LUTON.

MY LOUISA,

COULD you see the Mortimers, how happy—how transported they gaze at each other, you would exclaim with the psalmist,

*“ It is well for us to have been afflicted.”*

But you should tell things in order, and just as they happened. True, my beautiful monitor, (I perceive you are grown captious since Henry Valmont left Dublin, and must be indulged a little,) and now for—not only order, but precision itself. On the arrival of your letter, I read it to my Lord and Henry, and they agreed with me, that Laura should be made acquainted with its contents, to prepare her for seeing Mortimer. I  
there-



therefore went to Warley Cottage, after preparing her as well as I could for it, gave her your letter. Her animated countenance expressed a variety of sensations while she perused it. Oh ! said she, if his repentance should be feigned, Mortimer has every thing to fear from his violence and perfidy. I answered, that there could not remain a doubt of his sincerity, as he was sealing his contrition with his death ; his physicians all asserted that he could not recover, she might therefore dismiss every shadow of apprehension upon that head, and prepare to receive Mortimer at Emerton Place. I easily prevailed with my mother and Laura to return with me ; as we approached the house, I perceived Laura casting her eyes eagerly about on every side, as if she hoped to discover some object she most anxiously wished to see. I guessed her motive, but was obliged to repress her expectations, by assuring her, that it was impossible for Mortimer to arrive before the following day. She sighed, and all  
her

her spirits fled. We were handed out of the coach by my Lord, and your Henry, for yours, I am convinced he is. I have not a doubt that he loves you to distraction; he entertains me for hours with your perfections, without once reflecting that the beauty, graces, and accomplishments of one woman, are seldom a very agreeable subject to another; however, in the present case, he is very secure. But to return, we all exerted ourselves to dissipate Laura's anxiety, but without effect. Next morning she appeared, as if she had passed a sleepless night; immediately after breakfast, she placed herself in a window fronting the road, and fixed her eyes on the most distant point she could distinguish, and remained there some hours: at last she spied a carriage driving full speed, she started, turned pale, then red, then pale again, and in a moment fell senseless into her brother's arms. We brought her out to the door for the benefit of the air, and in our concern for her, entirely forgot the shock it would

would give Mortimer to see her in her present situation, he arrived before any of us thought of him. Oh ! I have lost her, for ever lost her ! cried he, and sunk on the ground motionless beside her ; his exclamation made us recollect ourselves ; Laura soon began to recover, she opened her eyes, and looking wildly, where is he ? where is my Mortimer ? the well-known sound of her voice re-animating him, he rose, and clasping her in his arms, my Laura, my love, my divine angel, we part no more, our trials are finished, and now we will only live for love and each other. Can I believe my happiness ? cried Laura. Is it possible we never, never more shall be separated ? Compose yourself, my love, answered he, and rest assured, that nothing but death shall ever divide us ; seeing they were quite recovered, we left them to converse without restraint. The variety of distresses they had endured, served only to heighten their present joy. Some time after we sat down to dinner, the most

- H                      compleatly



completely happy set of guests that have been assembled this century, Valmont sometimes heaved a soft sigh, which the little loves were very busy in waiving to you. To-morrow he leaves us upon business of consequence, which he has to transact in Dublin. I believe him. Louisa, that important business is you, now, if my conjectures are right, do not presume to play off any of your coquetish airs, if you do, I will turn traitor, and inform him, that you are over head and ears in love with him, a truth, which the conscious blush, while you read my threat, sufficiently confirms.—Adieu,

Your's, as you behave,

HONORA EMERTON.

LETTER

## LETTER XVI.

MISS LUTON TO THE COUNTESS OF  
EMERTON.

VERY far, my Honora, from an idea of practising coquetish airs, I am at this moment very sensibly afflicted at my brother's approaching dissolution. As soon as Mortimer left us, we had him brought here, he has been able to set up in the evening, and always chooses to sit in the drawing-room. He was sitting with me there, when Mr. Valmont arrived, my brother offered him his emaciated hand and said, you are a fellow of too much mettle to pursue a spectre with resentment, and as the principal sufferer has forgiven me, your pardon, I know will follow upon

H 2

my

my requesting it. Henry was too much shocked and affected to be able to pronounce one word, he pressed my brother's pale cold hand to his breast, and sat down by him with such an expression of sorrow and compassion in his countenance, as would have convinced any one of the tenderness of his feelings, and the excellence of his heart ; in the course of the day, my brother remarked Henry's attentions to me, and in the evening taxed him with it ; Henry's embarrassment made a confession useless ; after a pause, he confessed he loved from the first moment he beheld me, but that he had never ventured to acquaint me with his passion, having no fortune to offer me ; that his father had often declared, he would never lay his children under the least restraint in their choice of a partner for life, but he was wholly ignorant what fortune he had to expect from him, and not having been bred to any profession, he had no prospect of making one ; my brother advised him not to lose time, but mention



tion it to me, as a rival might deprive him of the woman he loved, while he went in pursuit of a fortune. My brother's advice suited his inclinations too well to be rejected, he requested a private audience, which he obtained, and in the most respectful terms, informed me of his passion. I don't know what I said in my confusion, but it made him so happy, that he was kneeling to mama in a few minutes. She told him she had not the smallest objection to make, that in her opinion, competence with affection was quite sufficient for happiness, that I had five thousand pounds, which should be paid down directly, and that at her death, I should have three hundred a year estate, that whatever Henry's father added to that, would enable us to live at least comfortably. As soon as my brother heard that all parties were agreed upon the match, he sent for us, and said he had a request to make to us, which he hoped we would comply with. I have not many days to reckon, said he, until

until I shall be numbered with the dead, and the few remaining hours I have, I ought to spend in repairing some of the mischiefs I have committed ; my estate is four thousand a year, one thousand of which I will settle on the best of mothers, the other three I mean to settle on Henry and Louisa, on condition they unite their hands in the course of next week, being a witness of their union, will be the greatest pleasure my poor broken heart can feel. I entreat it as a favour, and I demand it as a right, being Louisa's nearest male relation, I consider it as a passport to the grave, and the only balm capable of softening the rigours of my few remaining hours. Join with me, my mother, my sister can refuse you nothing, if you have any pity for me, let me see them united before I yield up my last breath—let me see my Louisa in the arms of a protector worthy of her. There was something so solemn in his words and manner, they made me tremble ; we all promised to obey

obey him as soon as possible : He then sent for some lawyers, and is now in private conference with them ; I suppose the day which is to determine the future happiness or misery of my life cannot be very distant. My poor brother declines visibly. Alas ! Honora ! I cannot be a joyful bride, but am ever most affectionately, your

LOUISA LUTON.

LETTER



LETTER XVII.

MR. JAMES TO MRS. MORTIMER.

MADAM,

WITH a feeble hand and a trembling heart, I presume to address the last lines Fate will permit me to trace to that dear object, the innocent cause of all my calamities, that angelic creature, that at the same moment I adored and injured, My death, which approaches fast, will, I hope, be an expiation for all the pangs I so cruelly inflicted upon you, since the blessed interference of Providence, by defeating my intentions, abridged my crimes: Heaven doth not reject the penitent sinner, but invites and pardons true  
true

true contrition, and you, beauteous Laura, who are its epitome, will not refuse your forgiveness and pity to a repentance so bitter as mine; I wish to hear it from your own lips, and then I shall die content. A very few days will conclude my short life, which has only been marked with violence, arrogance, and unbridled passions; those actions, which in passing pleasure gilded over and concealed their deformity, are now divested of their gaudy trappings, and I shrink with horror from the dreadful retrospect. I have discovered, but alas! too late! that to die peacefully, we must live innocently. Come dearest, and most lovely of your sex, come and pour the balm of peace into my dying ear, and sooth my tortured soul with the sweet sound of your forgiveness. You will not see in the justly abhorred James, a furious villain, who would alarm your delicacy, but his pale ghastly figure may for a moment appall you. The noble Mortimer, who knows my sincerity, will lead you to me,

H 2

perhaps

perhaps the Earl and Countess of Emerton, whose names stand high upon the list of merit, and their respectable, though unfortunate mother would accompany you, and honour the nuptials of your brother and my sister with their presence, as I hope to see their union compleated. before I close my eyes for ever. I have had great difficulty in writing this letter, my weakness has made it the work of some days: Come, and bring all your party with you, remember it is the last request of the unfortunate

JAMES.

LETTER



## LETTER XVIII.

MRS. MORTIMER TO MR. JAMES.

IT is impossible to refuse consolation to a person so deeply afflicted as Mr. James, he may therefore rest assured, that all our party (Mrs. Warley excepted, to whom travelling is distressing,) will make the utmost expedition possible, and be with him immediately. I have heard, and feel most sensibly your generous intentions towards my brother, and am Sir, your very humble servant,

LAURA MORTIMER..

LETTER

## L E T T E R   X I X .

COUNTRESS OF EMERTON TO MRS. WAR-  
LEY.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

WE had a very pleasant journey, and reached this place in safety. As we came within sight of the town, a damp seemed to hang on the spirits of the whole company, which was very much encreased on our being received by Mrs. and Miss Luton and Henry Valmont, whose melancholy faces, pathetically spoke the despair of their minds. We were introduced to Mr. James, he was lying on a sofa, supported with pillows, his eyes closed, his face pale, dejected, and quite motionless, I thought him dead, until he asked, who was there? Louisa answered, Lord and Lady Emerton. He raised himself so as to be able to see us, and looking at  
Laura

Laura for some moments, said, in a weak voice, I am sure you come to pardon me. I do, answered she, kneeling by him, I do from my heart forgive you, oh, strive to live amongst us, you will now make a worthy member of our society. Alas! sweet Laura! I feel the full value of your charitable wishes, but know that at this moment, I love you more than ever, for now I am convinced of the excellence of your gentle forgiving heart—but fate destined that heart for one more worthy of it than ever I could be, and were it possible, that my health should be restored, I should still be a prey to the hopeless anguish of unreturned love. The violence I have committed, may serve to convince you of the unquenchable flame you have kindled in my breast, and which death alone can extinguish; since you forgive me, it is enough, I die content. The look of despair, the solemn accent in which he spoke, and the resigned and final pronunciation of his own sentence deeply affected us all. The ladies



ladies wept, the men absolutely sobbed aloud. It has ever been my fate, said Mr. James, to distress those I love, but leave me now, I want some rest. We retired into another apartment, where we only interchanged a few words, we were all too deeply penetrated with sorrow to be able to enter into conversation. Some time after, Mr. James sent for me, as I approached him, I perceived a pocket-book in his hand. I flatter myself Lady Emerton will pardon the request I am going to make her, it is to take the trouble of choosing wedding cloathes for my Louisa, my mother, though pious and resigned, feels my situation too sensibly, to permit her to attend to any thing else. I know Louisa has the greatest deference for your taste, dearest Lady Emerton, allow a dying man to impose this tax on your goodness, take this note for one thousand pounds, and make my Louisa appear as a bride, suitable to her charms and my wishes, if that same should

should not be sufficient, I have as much more at her service. I readily undertook the commission, and am now the busiest of human beings. Louisa gets all her mother's jewels, which are very magnificent. Mrs. Luton watches every look of her son with truly maternal tenderness. I cannot help liking Mr. James, with all his faults, he has behaved so well to his sister.—Adieu, dearest mother, and love me as you are beloved by your dutiful

HONORA EMERTON.

LETTER

## LETTER XX.

COUNTESS OF EMERTON TO MRS. WAR-  
LEY.

YESTERDAY, my dearest mother, gave my Louisa the name of Valmont, there were only a very few intimate friends invited for the evening. Louisa was dressed in a robe turque of tiffany, striped garter blue and white, with a small running pattern of gold worked between the stripes, the under dress, white satin, a white chip hat, (for a hat she would have) lined with garter blue and trimmed with ribbon of the same colour intermixed with the richest and newest fashioned point lace, and a large plume of garter blue and white pen-feathers; a beautiful diamond necklace and  
ear-rings



ear-rings, shewed the elegant turn of her fine formed neck, half of which was becomingly veiled with point lace, the shape of her habit suited her delicate figure, and her girdle was enriched with so many valuable jewels, as would have tempted fingers, the least inclined to swindling, to have broke the eighth commandment; her neat little feet looked wonderfully pretty in garter blue sattin slippers, worked and fringed with gold. Her brother viewed her with pleasure, her enraptured lover with transport. A consciousness that every eye would be directed to her, gave an additional glow to her complexion, which finished a beauty already so near perfection. Laura chose to compliment Ireland, by wearing a poplin of a bright jonquil colour, the petticoat, pale blue sattin, covered with white crape, which was tied up in festoons, with bunches of liburnum and knots of white sattin ribbon; her fine dark hair, scorning limitation, flowed  
down

down her neck in graceful ringlets ; a small white hat lined with blue, trimmed with blue and yellow crape, and blue, white, and yellow feathers, set on one side of her head, added (if any thing could) to the dignity of her figure. My dress would be hardly worth recounting to any one but you, who take an interest in every thing that concerns me, it was Carmelite satten, a white petticoat, and a large cap ; my Lord payed me a compliment, fearing that nobody else would.

Louisa went through the ceremony with true delicacy and propriety, and without a shadow of affectation. Mr. James seems to forget his illness, and Mrs. Luton's animated countenance, gave an undoubted testimony of heartfelt satisfaction. Mr. Mortimer's regiment has been sent to England to recruit, and all his party have been urging my Lord and me to accom-  
pany

pany them to Bath, for which place they are to set out in a few days, but I am determined nothing shall take me so far from you; therefore I hope to embrace you in a few days, until then, believe me your dutifully affectionate

HONORA EMERTON.

LETTER



## LETTER XXI.

THE COUNTESS OF EMERTON TO Mrs.  
WARLEY.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

THIS morning, as Mrs. Luton and I were sitting with Mr. James, he seemed buried in melancholy reflections and unusually languid. I endeavoured to amuse him, but in vain, yet he was sensible of my attention, and thanked me for it in the kindest manner, but added, your goodness is thrown away upon me, the Vulture gnaws my heart, Laura is another's, and that other is worthy of her, they live for each other in perfect bliss, regardless of me, or of what I suffer from  
the

the deepest anguish of the human mind ;  
 hopeless love, embittered by remorse,  
 oh, may they still be happy, may their  
 joys encrease, when this scene is eter-  
 nally closed upon me,—death approaches  
 quickly—the sooner the better—thy will,  
 oh awful God, be done, he heaved a  
 deep sigh, and in that sigh, his wounded  
 spirit fled from its mortal mansion. His  
 mother and I, whose tears prevented us  
 from answering what he had said, were  
 some time before we perceived he had  
 resigned his soul into the hands of his  
 Creator ; if we considered that preci-  
 ous deposit as only a loan from Hea-  
 ven, which sooner or later, we are  
 bound to restore, it would make us  
 more cautious of the services we em-  
 ploy it. Mrs. Luton's grief, is that of  
 a pious and resigned christian. The  
 young people deplore his untimely fate  
 with real sorrow. As soon as the fu-  
 neral is over, Mrs. Luton, the Val-  
 monts, and Mortimer, are to go to Bath,  
 where

where they will probably soon forget  
their vexations, and the cause of them.  
I am extremely anxious to return to  
you and my dear boys, and will not delay  
a moment I can help. My Lord and I  
propose embracing you on Thursday  
next.

Believe me in every place, your

HONORA EMERTON.

F I N I S